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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[HOW RALPH AND EDITH PASSED THEIR TIME.]

The physician stared.

"Cologne is very healthy and very comfortable as a residence. Madame could not have fallen into better quarters."

"But how long will it be before she can be moved?"

"Six or seven weeks, calculating upon the most favourable circumstances."

"Six or seven centuries!" thundered Sir Morton, fairly foaming with rage.

The faithful Sarah looked after him in astonished dismay.

"Master hasn't been himself once since we came here," muttered she.

Here Edith made her appearance, and came hurrying to her aunt's bed with an anxious face and tearful eyes.

"Dear, dear Aunt Hester," cried she.

The familiar, affectionate voice seemed to arouse the patient from her stupor.

"Edith, darling, go away. I will not have you here, you will take the fever. Go away, I say;" and growing wild and excited, she screamed out, in a higher and higher key:

"Go away, go away! I will not have you here."

Edith, frightened and terribly alarmed by her name, began to sob.

The physician took her coolly by the hand and led her from the chamber to the little dressing-room, where Sir Morton was frantically pacing.

"Indeed, my patient is right, mademoiselle; it would be the wisest thing for you to leave the hotel, if not the town. Your presence only agitates her; fear for you might seriously retard her recovery, even were she convalescent."

Sir Morton blushed, and came to him hastily.

"Do you mean it would be truly better for the patient to have us away from the town?"

"I certainly do. Her nurse seems a very reliable and sensible person. She can be safely trusted as regards skill—her character of course you know better than I. You might tarry within reach of daily messengers, and all parties be relieved from danger as well as anxiety."

"We will go!" exclaimed Sir Morton, in a tone of intense relief. "You understand, it is only because our dear friend will be more likely to recover swiftly. Peter and his wife shall remain with her. We shall hear from her all the time, and the moment she is able, come and take her away."

Edith was still in tears.

"I wish she had not objected to my presence; but I shall not dare disobey the physician's injunctions."

"Then we will go at once," repeated Sir Morton, "all of us."

"No," interrupted a calm voice from the other doorway, "not all; I shall remain by Aunt Hester to make sure that she is carefully attended to by the physician and nurse."

"What do you mean, Guy?" demanded his father, angrily; "you must go with us—I insist upon it."

"Consider a moment, dear father. It is very right and proper for Edie to be removed from danger, especially since Aunt Hester is so anxious herself for it. It is equally advisable that you should accompany her, because you have already complained of the ill effect of the air at Cologne; but for our beloved relative to be left entirely to hired care is too shameful. Imagine your own self-reproach, your remorse and compunction if she should die with not one of us beside her. It is my place to remain. Say no more, father; you surely see that it is the only proper thing."

Sir Morton looked vexed, but convinced.

"Be it so," said he, slowly; "but, Guy, I want your promise that you will seek no new acquaintances."

"Certainly," answered Guy, although very much astonished at the request; "this is neither the occasion nor time for me to think of such a thing, had I the inclination. I shall remain here and send you daily letters concerning Aunt Hester. But where shall you go?"

"To some quiet country village. I have not determined upon one, but will write you as soon as I do so."

"You will say to Aunt Hester, Guy, that only her

THE FORTUNE-TELLER OF THE RHINE.

CHAPTER V.

SIR MORTON's expectations of leaving Cologne the next day were dashed to the ground by the entrance of Peter into his room, long before his languid eyes, which had remained wakeful the first half of the night, were ready to close.

"I beg your pardon for disturbing you, Sir Morton, but Sarah tells me she is much alarmed about Mrs. Owen, and she wants to know what physician you will send for."

His lordship checked the oath which arose to his lips, and only said, gravely:

"Mrs. Owen ill! why, she said last night it was only a cold. I hope Sarah is mistaken."

"So do I, my lord, for she seems quite frightened, and says her lady was wandering all night, and terribly burnt up with fever."

Thoroughly roused now, Sir Morton sprang up and dressed hastily.

A single glance at his relative's glowing checks, and unusually brilliant eyes, confirmed his worst fears.

He turned to consult the master of the inn, and obtain the address of the most skillful physician.

The man of medicine shook his head with oracular gravity as soon as he beheld the patient.

"A very dangerous, although not really contagious fever; has she endured any unusual fatigue or exposure?"

Sir Morton groaned.

"She was on that steamer which was burnt on the river above Cologne, and thoroughly drenched, of course."

"Very unfortunate for madame. She will need very careful nursing and extreme quiet. She has a very delicate constitution, I judge."

Sir Morton groaned still more heavily.

"How long will it be necessary for us to remain in this accursed town?"

own edict could banish me from her sick-bed, and if the worst come, do not fail to send for me. I honour you all the more that you remain," said Edith.

Guy kissed the little hand extended to him.

"Where is Ralph, will he go or stay?" queried Sir Morton.

"Go, of course. Edie will need his gay spirits to keep her from melancholy," replied Guy, promptly.

And Ralph confirmed his prediction.

Sir Morton seemed unable to rest until they set forth. Then, while repeating a score of anxious charges to his son about remaining quiet and unnoticed, he gave a great sigh of relief and resumed something like his old manner.

"Now," thought Guy, as he returned to the deserted sitting-room, after a careful survey of the physician's recipes, and the appointments of the sick-room, "now I can keep my promise to the fortune-teller."

And with this exclamation he drew forth the little velvet case, and feasted his admiring eyes with the portrait.

It was a different expression from that he had seen; there was an arch light sparkling in the eyes, a cheery smile on the lips, but it was still the spiritual, pensive face of his Undine.

Whence could it have come? From the fortune-teller? Yet what could she know about the girl? From the beautiful Undine herself?

That thought thrilled him!

Alas for Guy! The possession of that picture was the surest fulfilment of the sybil's prophecy. It did not occur to him to question, was it sent for that purpose?

He did not remember that this constant admiring gaze was leading him with wily strategem to the very point from which he had resolved to fly.

He only knew that he had the portrait of Undine, and that he was not to be deprived of it.

The moment the sunset glories filled the sky with tints outvying the most brilliant colours of art, he took his way to the vestibule of St. Peter's.

It was dark and silent. A sort of chill fell upon his spirits, as he leaned against the column and waited for the sybil's approach.

He had almost concluded to turn back, when her hasty step was heard on the pavement.

"I am here; follow, if thou wilt, whither I shall lead."

Guy hesitated a moment, and then said, quietly:

"I am armed, and I have left in my room an account of the appointed rendezvous, and with whom, I judge, therefore, it will be extremely unwise to lead me into any harm. I will follow."

She laughed a low, indignant protest against his suspicions.

"Why should I wish to harm you? You sought help from my art, and I am ready to give it. You come of your own free will, or not at all."

"You are right; lead on."

"Keep at a distance behind me. It might embarrass you to be accused of keeping unseemly company."

As she spoke she turned and glided swiftly away. So swiftly, indeed, that Guy found it required his best efforts to keep in sight of her.

She left the busy streets of trade, and turned into a narrow court.

At a tall house overtopping its neighbour by a storey, she paused, applied a key to the door and ushered Guy into a dim room, lighted by the smouldering embers of fire in an open fireplace.

A mysterious touch of her hand illuminated the apartment from an open dish of clear oil, containing a little oval of ivory with a tiny taper floating in the liquid.

The walls were hung with black drapery, thickly strewed with mystical figures in fiery red.

An ebony table, spherical in form, held some twenty tablets with weird inscriptions.

A strangely gleaming mirror swung at one end of the room, and below it was seated, as if in grim guard thereof, the infallible black cat, the never-failing companion of dealers in the black art.

More than this, there seemed not.

His companion threw off her cloak, and turning towards him, showed a fine-looking person of middle age, clad in a rich oriental dress, whose scarlet turban, with its heavy gilt fringe, was both picturesque and becoming.

"Now," said she, "thou shalt perceive for thyself whether I be an impostor or not. Judge me fairly, Sir Guy Mordaunt, and revile me if I speak you false."

"You know my name," began Guy, with a start of surprise, "but that is not strange, anyone might learn it at the hotel. Yet I am not Sir Guy as yet, perhaps I shall never be."

"Perhaps not," answered the sybil, "but you are Sir Morton Mordaunt's son. But it is not of that you would know. You are eager to know something of the dark-eyed maiden whom you rescued from a watery grave. I did not learn this at the hotel."

"No," answered Guy, "yet the maiden herself might have told you."

"Incredulous and faithless," ejaculated the sybil, "bold, and judge if I need confirmation of anything but my art."

She threw a handful of odorous bark into a little vessel and set it over the lamp.

In a little time it was bubbling and smoking, and ere many minutes the room was filled with the dense but fragrant smoke.

When it cleared away the fortune-teller's strangely picturesque figure stood before him, and her outstretched hand pointed to the mirror.

Guy uttered a cry of mingled astonishment and delight.

For there, with waves of sea-blue crape flowing about her graceful figure, her white arms crossed meekly, her beautiful head bowed, and her dark eyes bent upon him, was the life image of her who had drifited with him down the Rhine.

The ivory miniature had seemed a perfect likeness, but this was far beyond; the graceful outlines and soft colours were those of Nature herself, stolen, it would seem, by some mystic art from her very palette.

Guy held his breath with mingled awe and delight.

"Is it the one who has dwelt in your mind ever since your arrival in Cologne?" asked the sybil, triumphantly.

"It is," answered Guy; "what do you know of her? Inquire, I beseech you, what it is that makes my name so odious to her?"

The strange woman threw another handful of bark upon the flame, and once more the dense smoke blinded Guy's eyes.

When it cleared off the mirror reflected only the weird-scarlet-figure hangings of the wall opposite.

Guy uttered an exclamation of disappointment.

"It is enough," said the woman, coldly; "you are satisfied now that I do not speak idly, or without knowledge. That is enough for the commencement. I am but the humble instrument. I wait until Fate beckons me forward."

"At least," cried Guy, "answer me this. Was it you who dropped a miniature of the same lady at my feet in the public square?"

She hesitated a moment, and then answered, frankly:

"It was."

Guy was lost in thought, and then said, slowly:

"I confess I am puzzled to account for your motive."

"I was afraid your scruples of conscience would prevail and you would fail to seek this meeting. I was sure you could not resist that miniature."

"Was that right?" asked Guy, ruefully. "I do, indeed, feel already like a guilty person. My faith is pledged to another. She is gentle, and loving, and trusting. I would not for the world wrong her trust, and yet an irresistible spell draws me towards this unknown Undine whom the Rhine gave to my arms for a brief half-hour of delight."

An exultant smile crossed the features of the listener at this wistful confession.

"The spell works charmingly," muttered she, and then in a louder voice she added:

"Spare yourself unmerited self-reproach. It is the potent spirit of Nature which stirs your soul. Your marriage with the blue-eyed English girl would be wrong. She holds not the key to the secret chamber of your heart. She is not the queen to whom love has given the crown. She is an usurper."

"She is the betrothed of my boyhood," answered Guy, firmly.

"The bride of your father's choice, not of your own. Behold, your heart hath spoken and elected another."

"I will not listen to it. Gloriously beautiful as she is, I will tear out her radiant image," cried Guy, shivering at the thought.

"You cannot!" was the exulting reply.

"Who are you? What weird influence has been around me, and changed my whole nature?" continued Guy, half-angrily.

"You have come to the Rhine, and you have met your fate, that is all."

"I had better have yielded to my father's entreaty and hurried away from Cologne," murmured Guy.

"Ha! So he was anxious to get away? Did you tell him about the miniature?"

"He saw it. He would not believe it was a true likeness."

Her eyes gleamed fiercely.

"I marvelled at the abrupt departure. I understand it now. And he urged your following his example. Ha, ha! it was too late; the spell was upon you!"

"What wild talk is this? I remained because my aunt was ill, and I would not leave her alone with servants."

"Where was the blue-eyed betrothed? So she flitted away to spend the pleasant days in company of the gay-voiced Ralph. No wonder you scruple to wrong her claims," she said, sarcastically.

Guy's cheek flushed.

"It is instant punishment for my folly that I am thus insulted."

She changed her manner at once.

"Guy Mordaunt, you have no truer friend in the wide world than she who stands before you. What! when I would take from you a common pebble, to bestow on you a diamond without a flaw, when right and justice, and all things high and holy demand it, do you shrink as from an evil prompting of the Fallen One? Man, when I have daily besought heaven's blessing on my efforts, do you dream that my work is sinful?"

She spoke under strong excitement.

Her eyes gleamed, her breast heaved, her hands were clenched together passionately.

"What can you mean?" exclaimed the still more mystified Guy.

"That I have watched for your coming year after year, that I have hoped and prayed for the meeting which a wise Providence brought about in such an unforeseen manner."

"More and more enigmas!" was Guy's impatient response. "You would have me understand that you know of me in England, you, the Rhine fortune-teller?"

"Precisely. I have watched your course anxiously, inexpressibly thankful to see you growing up so noble and worthy."

"Perhaps," said Guy, "you know my father, or the last Sir Guy?"

At the last name her features grew deathly pale.

She caught her breath with a quick gasp, and hissed rather than spoke.

"Know him! Knew Sir Guy Mordaunt, a fiend in the disguise of an angel, a serpent trailing his deadly poison across the sweetest flower of an earthly Eden. Oh, indeed, to my life-long misery did I know Sir Guy Mordaunt."

Guy was inexpressibly shocked.

"There was reason then for the horror of Undine," said he; "and yet, dear, dear Aunt Hester was so enthusiastic in his praise, so confidently assured me his character was without a blemish—what can I think?"

"Whatever you choose, until proofs are laid before you," answered the mysterious woman, resuming her cold and coy manner, "and now allow me to wish you good-night."

"But I shall hear from you again."

"When it is ordered. Adieu."

She led the way to the outer door, and Guy passed out, the cool evening air striking him with a peculiar sensation, as though he had emerged from some magician's cavern into the everyday world again.

CHAPTER VI

SIR MORTON had found a very retired village, much to the astonishment of Ralph and Edith, and there, just far enough to hear from Cologne every other day, he proposed to establish himself.

He had found somewhere a French lady to act as duenna for Edith, and there all concurred about her movements ended.

At first the young people had been rather indignant to waste their time in such a by-place, but after a few days no complaint was heard, and they seemed perfectly happy in hunting up the most romantic nooks of the really lovely country places in riding, boating, and a score of outdoor amusements, from which they invariably returned with sparkling eyes and joyous smiles; the discreet French woman bringing up the rear, just out of hearing distance.

One day, after hearing the most favourable accounts of Mrs. Owen, Edith was in extravagant spirits, and challenged Ralph to a race across the smoothly turfed lawn.

She came off victorious, panting with exertion, and breathless with laughter, and flung herself upon a vine-shaded bank.

"Ah, how delightful this is. It is nice, Ralph, to have a companion of such unfailing spirits as yours. Such a contrast to Sir Morton."

"Well, I must confess Sir Morton's moods are inexpressible just now. But he has changed very much, it seems to me. He is so restless and abstracted; sometimes he looks tragically fierce, and again haggardly miserable. What can it mean? Do you fancy aunt's illness has anything to do with it? I have been told that he has repeatedly offered his hand in marriage to her. And yet that would scarcely account for it."

"I don't know, I am sure. I have given up trying to fathom his looks. But it is excessively disagreeable. Such black looks of melancholy chill you, even though they are not obtruded upon you. One can sympathize with open sorrow, but these hidden

wounds are especially tantalizing to me," answered Edith.

"I acknowledge I hold it nothing less than a duty to take yourself out of sight when the dark spirit seizes you. When you can't help on the general cheer, abscond; that's my motto."

"And you act up to it, Ralph, I am sure. I am astonished when I remember what a delightful week I have spent where I expected to be so dull."

"Thank you; that is a compliment I appreciate; and coming from your lips it is of double value. No one else's opinion can be of such importance to me as yours, Miss Edith." And here Ralph sighed a little, and added, timidly, "But what use to advert to what you must know better than words of mine can tell? If I accept my bitter fate less manfully than I ought, it is because the one who claims the gem I prize beyond all else the wide world can offer has such cold appreciation of his blissful fortune."

Edith cast down her eyes and coloured, her hands trembled a little over the spray of blossoms she held, but she ventured no reply.

"Yes," continued Ralph, with increasing vehemence, "I own I am sometimes strangely angry with Guy, notwithstanding he and I have been such fast friends, to be so blind, so indifferent to what would thrill another's soul with inexpressible rapture. Do you think I have not noticed it? Ah, Miss Edith, when I have seen the pained look upon your face, it has taken all my self-control to keep me from knocking him down."

Edith laughed a little nervously, but she was glad of the excuse to cover her agitation any way.

"Pray don't allow your sympathy for me to carry you to such violent lengths. You forget that Guy and I have grown up together so like brother and sister that I can pardon a little heedlessness," answered she, but the tone belied the words.

Ralph was not slow to perceive it.

"Miss Edith, I am afraid I ought not to say it, but an irresistible impulse impels me. Pardon the boldness for the sake of the well-meaning. If the time should ever come that you are ready to put off this engagement to Guy will you remember if I should not be near you, that there is one as passionately, entirely, absorbingly devoted to you, as he is calm, and cold, and indifferent? One who would kneel at your feet in gratitude for the slightest token of favour."

"Ralph," said Edith, "you must not talk so, or I must leave you."

But there was a happy sparkle in her eye, which spoke more eloquently than many words.

"I will not say another word, Miss Edith, if you only understand me. Give me your subject and I will launch out upon it in my most spirited style."

"What were we talking about last?" asked Edith.

"Why, I thought that was forbidden," said Ralph, with a mischievous glance into her downcast eyes.

"You know what I mean, before—before—"

"Ah, I comprehend now. I think it was Sir Morton and his exceedingly eccentric behaviour of late. I wish it were a stringent law all over the world that everybody who came into a cheerful circle with sour or angry looks should be heavily fined. But really, it seemed to me this morning his trouble was something serious. Did you see him when he received that letter from the waiter? Such a look of horror came over his face I was alarmed. I feared my Aunt Hester had grown suddenly worse, and asked him anxiously if it were so. But he shook his head and replied, hoarsely: 'It has nothing to do with Mrs. Owen or any of us'; and a little time afterwards, if I be not much mistaken, I heard him asking our host for a guide-book which would show him where he could find a still more retired village. From which I deduced that we are to move again."

"What can it mean? it perplexes me sorely," replied Edith, anxiously. "Good heavens, where will he bury us next?"

"He may hunt up the Black Forest for aught I know. And in truth, Miss Edith, I go in such good company it does not concern me much."

"He is so strange one hardly knows what to expect." She sighed a little, and added, absently, "I am afraid Guy will be like his father. What brilliant company the pair of them will prove."

Ralph looked into her face with a half-quizzical smile on his lips, but he forebore to startle her by utterance of the hopeful thoughts which filled his mind.

"Well, I have given you warning, so you need not be surprised when he gives us notice of moving."

"Dear Aunt Hester! how I wish she were well again. I cannot bear the thoughts of going any farther from her."

"Here comes Sir Morton now. Why, Guy is with him."

Edith rose hastily, with a little conscious blush on her cheek.

Why was there such a guilty feeling in her heart, when but a moment before she had been looking upon herself as the injured one.

Guy's face was troubled and perplexed, but she might have spared herself the little spasm of self-accusation and compunction.

It never occurred to Guy that there was anything to be vexed about in finding Ralph and Edith so contentedly enjoying a *tete-a-tete*.

He went up to her quietly as though he had met her every day at the breakfast-table.

"Edie, dear, what do you think of this new plan of my father's?"

"I have not heard it, I believe."

"I don't see what you find so very strange about it, Guy," said Sir Morton, testily. "I am bored to death with this place. But for the unfortunate illness of Mrs. Owen, we should have been far away from here by this time. Indeed, you are aware it was to gratify your whim that we changed our route to visit the Rhine; much good have we found of it."

"No one can regret it more than I," observed Guy; "but indeed we may consider it a fortunate escape. She is not dangerously ill; we were saved from imminent peril, all of us. I really see nothing so very deplorable, except that you should choose such tedious halting-places. I am afraid poor little Edie is dull beyond description here—what will it be farther back in the country?"

"I don't see that she has pined any; she has certainly not spoken a word of complaint."

"I have done very well, Guy," answered Edith; "there are charming little nooks around the place."

"And you don't mind the change?" urged Sir Morton, eagerly. "Guy might go with us, and Ralph go back to Cologne, to join us, as soon as his aunt is able to come."

Edith's countenance fell. She could not deny that this was a very direful prospect. What! shut up in a wretched little country village, with the gloomy Sir Morton, the abstracted Guy, and no light-hearted, merry, gallant Ralph, to make the laggard hours slip by in golden sands.

She could not resist saying:

"I think I had better go back to my aunt. By this time her apprehensions on my account must be allayed."

Sir Morton shook his head.

"I really wish I had consulted another physician. I daresay she could be moved with care, and then we could all be together again."

"What hinders it now?" observed Guy, a little impatiently; "why not go back with me to Cologne? The danger of infection is past, supposing the fever a contagious one, which I by no means grant. Then, as soon as possible, we will continue our route."

"Go back to Cologne!" ejaculated Sir Morton, "no indeed!"

He fairly shuddered as he spoke, and then added, angrily:

"I really think, Guy, you are a little presumptuous. Who should lay out the programme for our movements, if not I?"

"My dear father, I don't mean to dispute your authority, but this sudden change, this leaving at night, by such an unusual route, and hurrying off, no one's to know whither, looks so strange. One would almost think you were trying to avoid some secret foe."

Sir Morton's cheek was fairly livid.

"You act as you please, all of you," fairly shouted he, "but as for me, I leave this place to night, and in the manner I have already laid out."

Guy bit his lip, but refrained from any reply to add to his father's evident irritation.

He drew Edie aside to ask anxiously:

"What ails my father, Edie? He has changed very much, both in look and action, since he left Cologne. I am sorely tried by his strange behaviour."

"I am sure I can't enlighten you. Ralph said something about his receiving a letter this morning which seemed to affect him very much. I really wish we were to return to Cologne, but you need not be concerned about me. I have truly enjoyed the whole of my stay here, and I daresay it will be the same in the proposed place. Where is it, by the way?"

"That's it, he won't tell me. He says if I remain in Cologne, he'll find a way to give me the information, but that he shall go so that every anxious simpleton can't trace his route. I came down hoping to persuade him to return to Cologne. But I see that is hopeless. It might be that I ought to remain with him, for I fear his mind is unduly excited—by what, is the mystery. I wonder if Ralph would like to go back in my place?"

Edith knew very well Ralph's sentiments about the matter, but she answered:

"You had better ask him. I can't answer for him. I think, though, that I shall insist upon going to my aunt. I have been contented to remain here, because knowing that I could hasten to her side the moment she was convalescent, when she will need a different

sort of nursing; but the case is altered if we are to be hurried farther away."

Guy looked as thoroughly discontented as she felt.

"I'll see what Ralph says about it."

Ralph was ready to act according to their pleasure. He would do his best in whichever situation they might place him.

The case was finally submitted to Sir Morton. He gave ready assent to the latest plan.

"Yes, that is best," cried he, in a tone of immediate satisfaction. "Let Ralph and Edith go to their aunt. You and I can take a run round the country, and see all of the out-of-the-way places, Guy; that's the way to learn about a nation, to leave the cities behind, and see what the country folk are made of." And merrily he ejaculated, "Now we can be off and on, and no one be the wiser. One cannot make speedy movements with a woman and her baggage in the party."

Guy did not make known his own extreme reluctance to leave Cologne. He was really concerned about his father, and kept narrow watch upon him.

So having seen Ralph and Edith off to Cologne, looking rather confused, and trying to hide their extreme pleasure at the change, as Guy might have seen had he been really vitally interested, or less preoccupied, he returned to help about the arrangements for their own midnight travel by a private coach to the railroad, some dozen miles away, which might as well have been taken at the inn door.

Guy soon perceived how his comments upon the eccentricity of their course irritated his companion, and forbore to intrude them. Yet he failed not to mark how his father started if a traveller looked curiously into the coach window, how he pulled down the travelling-cap over his face at all the public places, and scrupulously avoided giving his name anywhere. Only one explanation came to Guy. It must be a species of insanity induced by the intense excitement of the steamboat disaster. It needed soothing, calming, that anxious, restless, perturbed mind. The son was as tenderly thoughtful, the moment he conceived this idea, as the most devoted wife or mother could have been.

He humoured what he called the hallucination, and was rewarded by seeing something of the old calmness return. The farther they went the more Sir Morton's spirits rose; and when Guy acquiesced, as if it were the most ordinary proposal, in his wish that they should pass as Mr. Morton and son, he became fairly jubilant.

"That's a clever fellow, Guy. You know how an Englishman hates publicity, and familiarity. We shan't be annoyed by that impertinent curiosity now," said he; "now I shall begin to enjoy my tour."

And it really seemed that he was right. For a week he was genial, contented, almost happy, taking a leisurely journey across an interesting country, avoiding the larger towns, but seeing all of interest in the rural districts.

Guy began to be relieved, and was thinking of venturing to propose returning to the rest of the party, when he came in upon him one evening, and was startled by the wild, haggard expression of his face.

All the old haunted face had returned with added look of agonized despair.

His eyes glared fiercely, his teeth chattered, and his hands were clenched over a small sheet of paper. He thrust it hastily into his pocket as he saw Guy, and tried to call up a smile, which was only a ghastly grimace.

Guy was too shocked to speak a word.

"I've been thinking, Guy, we'd better be returning back to Cologne now. Mrs. Owen will be likely to be convenience by this time, won't she?"

"I presume so, sir. I didn't understand you with regard to return there. But I'm perfectly ready, indeed very glad."

Sir Morton shivered, muttered something about the chilly evening air, and then added, apologetically:

"You see, I've been thinking, Guy, she might consider it rather unkind. It didn't strike me in that light before, but now I have thought of it I could not in conscience stay here. She's an estimable lady, is Mrs. Owen; I shouldn't like her to think I showed her any disrespect, or lack of attention, you know."

He spoke hurriedly.

It was evident he was only talking to hide his embarrassment.

Guy's heart was sickening with a vague dread, but he forced himself to appear cheerful. He would have given a year's income to have seen the contents of that paper.

He remembered now that a dark-cloaked stranger had exchanged a few words with his father at the last station.

A conviction came to him that the terrible intelligence, whatever it was, came from that person.

Without appearing to be at all surprised or anxious, Guy kept ceaseless vigil, and watched every movement.

So he was aware when Sir Morton crept stealthily up at night, searched his pockets, and carried something, the paper no doubt, to the little grate he had ordered filled with coals, just as he retired.

He saw the glare of the momentary flame light up a face convulsed with anguish, and longed to fling himself before him, and entreat to share whatever woe it was had come so mysteriously upon him. But a dread of inducing greater excitement restrained him.

They turned their faces again towards the Rhine. Every hour and day that brought them nearer saw Sir Morton growing paler and sterner.

Guy could no longer believe it was an imaginary trouble; he himself shrank with dread from reaching Cologne, in the conviction that something terrible was to happen there.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

At a white heat all magnetism disappears; it is still sensible in iron when heated to a dark red glow.

NITRO-GLYCERINE, when long exposed to a moderate cold, will crystallize in needles.

FIFTEEN million pins are said to be daily called for in this country, in the manufacture of which 2,727 tons of brass wire are consumed.

The gauge of the Mont Cenis Railway is but 3 ft. 7 1/2 in., while that of the French and Italian railways is 4 ft. 8 1/2 in.

Some idea of the consumption of brass wire in the manufacture of pins may be gathered from the fact that one firm in Birmingham consumes 150 tons per annum.

DR. MARSHALL HALL discovered a sort of supplementary heart in the tail of the eel, and he noticed that "the vessels which issue from the caudal heart appear to have a particular distribution to the spinal marrow.

It has been recently ascertained that oxygen has no action whatever on hydrogen, carbon or carbonic acid placed within a mass which is at a temperature higher than the melting-point of platinum.

In its liquid state nitro-glycerine is a yellow or brownish oil, heavier than water, and insoluble in it. It does not easily catch fire, nor does it explode without a smart shock, except when by long keeping it gets decomposed.

ACCORDING to the "Report of the Select Committee on Ordnance, 1866," the whole sum expended at Woolwich and Elswick, in plant and in producing about 3,000 Armstrong guns with the necessary carriages and ammunition up to that date was £2,539,547 17s. 8d.

In ascending into the air, the heart-beats increase 5 for the first 3,000 feet, 7 more for the next 1,500 feet, 8 for the next 1,500, and 5 for each 1,500 feet of ascent after that. This is an average increase of one beat for each 100 yards of ascent.

VEINS of coal have been traced to the southern part of Missouri, from the mouth of the river Des Moines, through twelve counties, into the adjoining Indian territory; from Glasgow, up the Missouri river, to the border of Iowa; and from St. Joseph to Shelby, showing the existence of a coal area of more than 26,000 square miles in the northern and western parts of the State.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINITE PRINCIPLES.—More bones enter into the formation of the skull in fishes than in any other animals; and the composition of this skull has been rightly deemed the most difficult problem in comparative anatomy. "It is truly remarkable," writes the gifted Oken, to whom we owe the first clue to its solution, "what it costs to solve any one problem in philosophical anatomy. Without knowing the *what*, the *how*, and the *why*, one may stand, not for hours or days, but weeks, before a fish's skull, and our contemplation will be little more than a vacant stare at its complex statalistic form."—Professor Owen's "Principal Forms of the Skeleton."

NEW IRON-PRESERVING AGENT.—Dr. Henry Edward Francis de Briou, a Paris physician, who for many years has resided in England, has discovered and patented a process for preparing from India-rubber an *enamel paint*, which is absolutely proof against the action of the atmosphere, as well as against the power of all liquids (including the most potent acids) to affect iron. The preparation is applied cold and in a liquid state, and in consistency and general appearance it resembles such common oil-paint as is ordinarily used for iron-work. It may be applied with ease; but, of course, it is necessary that the process of application should be conducted with

such care as will insure a complete covering of the surfaces to be protected. This covering may be so thin that its presence cannot be detected; while it leaves the protected surfaces in all their original sharply defined freshness. It hardens also at once, and immediately forms a smooth and lustrous enamel-like covering, air-proof, damp-proof, water-proof, and acid-proof. Thus protected, the iron is safe. Rust cannot accumulate on the surface of this enamel paint, nor corrode beneath it.

HEYBROOK ALUM-WORKS, TUNSTALL.

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE has added the manufacture of alum to its wealth-producing power, the process being now carried on a considerable scale at the above-mentioned works. They obtain their alum from the native coal shale, a hitherto worthless substance, with the assistance of sulphate of ammonia.

The shale having been calcined is placed in a series of lead pans, which are heated from below, and is boiled for forty-eight hours in sulphate of ammonia. The object of introducing this acid is to cause crystallization, and its use at this early stage of the manufacture is unusual, the more common practice being to steep the calcined shale in water and to add the crystallizing acid at the next stage, which we now come to.

The crude lye having been boiled for forty-eight hours, the pans are tapped, and the lye flows into two large cisterns, each capable of holding five tons of alum. Here it is allowed to cool gradually, and the alum is precipitated to the bottom in the form of minute crystals.

By the use of sulphate of ammonia as a precipitate, between eighty and ninety parts of alum are thrown down in a solid form. The subsided powder is then removed, and a portion of the lye adhering to the crystals drains off, but as the substance is still of a dirty yellow colour, various purifying processes are resorted to, consisting mainly of washing the crystals in water. The liquor is then run off into coolers where large crystals are formed, which, having been pounded and washed, are ready for the final process of crystallization.

The alum is dissolved in boiling water, and the solution is then run into large vessels called rocking casks. The staves of these casks are loose; they are lined with lead, which overlap the edges, and on being placed together and secured with strong iron hoops, are perfectly water-tight.

The casks in use at the Heybrook Works will each contain three tons of soluble alum.

After having been allowed to remain four or six days, the hoops are loosened and the sides of the tubs removed, leaving exposed, to all appearance, a solid mass of alum, 6 ft. or 7 ft. high, and from 4 ft. to 5 ft. in diameter at the base. This solidity is, however, only apparent, for the mass contains within itself a considerable quantity of what is termed "mother liquor," and in order to allow the whole of the salt held in solution inside to crystallize and cool, the mass is left for two or three weeks without being interfered with.

At the end of that time holes are pierced in the side, and the mother liquor remaining flows into a cistern, and the cone, on being broken open, is found to be from 12 in. to 14 in. thick, and to be covered all over on its inner surface with octahedron crystals, many of which are very beautiful. The mass is then broken up into lumps of about one hundredweight each, and is ready for the market.

Messrs. Bray and Thomson manufacture upon the spot the sulphate of ammonia used as the precipitate, and for this purpose they import considerable quantities of a mineral called Spanish ore, which is obtained from the river Gandiana. The ore is burnt in a series of kilns with gasworks refuse containing oxide of iron, and the fumes passing into an enormous leaden vitriol chamber, sulphuric acid is formed, and the sulphate of ammonia is produced by the direct application of this acid to the liquor obtained at gasworks by the distillation of coal. The ore, after having been deprived of its sulphur, is sent to a distance to be smelted for copper.

It is worthy of note, as showing the tendency of chemical science to utilize substances formerly worthless, that not only is the alum obtained from the refuse of coal-mines, but that the manufacture of alum has led to the absorption of large quantities of ammonia water, which hitherto had been an almost worthless residuum, to dispose of which without creating a nuisance taxed the ingenuity of the managers of gasworks, but which now realizes from 5s. to 8s. per ton.

LITHOGRAPHIC PROCESS FOR TINTING PHOTOGRAPHS.—Messrs. Southwell Brothers have introduced a method of tinting the backgrounds of photographs so as to give the effect of a portrait on a neutral ground with white highlights. The process is thus described in the specification. A good portrait negative has its background carefully blocked out or rendered opaque. In the finished print it is therefore

perfectly white, and this is then laid upon a flat board, and covered with a piece of tracing-paper. On this the portrait is carefully outlined with a lead pencil, and the image thus formed is then cut out. Over that portion of the photograph on which the proposed tint is not required, the tracing-paper is fastened with a little gum; and then the tint is printed over the whole, and the removal of the tracing-paper with a damp sponge completes the first part of the process so far as regards the background; if a general tone be required over the whole, a second printing is used. The photograph is next damped between sheets of wet blotting-paper, and a properly prepared embossing-block is used in a lever or other press, to give a texture to the whole resembling in effect and appearance that of drawing-paper.

WHAT IS A RIVER, AND WHAT ARE ITS USES?

A RIVER is the drain of a hilly district, which carries the water which falls from above, or that which springs from beneath, along the low grounds till it empties it into the sea. The quality of the water depends partly on the nature of the ground through which the rain filtrates to nourish the springs, and partly from the surface over which the redundant water flows before it reaches the river.

Rain, as it descends from the clouds, is pure distilled water, and will readily absorb any soluble matter with which it comes in contact. In passing through the earth it partakes of the nature of the soil, whether it be chalk, clay, iron, or any other; in passing over the surface it absorbs the salts from decayed vegetable or animal substances, which it holds in solution, and from which it cannot be separated except by distillation. Water is thus said to be hard or soft in proportion to the quantity and nature of that which it holds in solution.

When the rain falls more rapidly than the soil can absorb it, it acts as a natural scavenger, washing away all the impurities from drains, cesspools, ditches, &c., and drives all such matter into the river, where they become mechanically mixed, or, as it is generally termed, the water is made muddy. These grosser particles can be removed by filtration, which is nothing more than sifting, just as broken earthenware oyster-shells, &c., are separated from ashes at a dust-heap.

Having now seen what a river is, let us consider what are its uses.

Its waters convey fertility to the valleys, and furnish food to plants from the impurities which it has brought down from the water-shed of the adjacent country; it supplies canals with the means of transport to merchandise; it furnishes power for grinding corn, &c. Are we, therefore, justified in making use of the water of a river for the supply of drink to the inhabitants of our towns and villages? Let us take one example.

The river Lea rises at a small village in Bedfordshire, called Leagrave; thence it flows to Luton, a manufacturing town of about 20,000 inhabitants, the liquid from the sewers of which, after being deodorized, falls into the Lea; it then passes through an agricultural district to Welwyn, Hertford, Ware, Broxbourne, and finally enters the Thames. One of its tributaries, the Mimram, rises at Whitwell, and after receiving the drainage of a tan-yard, passes on to its junction. Another tributary receives the drainage of Walkern, a considerable village. Thus, four towns, many more villages and homesteads, send forth their refuse by the river Lea to the vicinity of London. Can such a stream be a proper source for water supply to the inhabitants of any part of London? Filtration may make the water clear, but it does not remove the impurities which it holds in solution.

Whence, then, can water be obtained for the great metropolis? Anyone acquainted with a chalk district can testify to the amazing quantity that may be procured from wells sunk deep into the chalk formation; a number of these sunk a mile or two apart would furnish a very considerable supply.

Let any person examine the natural springs at Ashwell, on the Royston and Hitchin Railway, the source of the river Cam, or inquire at the Hitchin railway-station, where the whole water supply to the engines of the Great Northern Railway is obtained from a well, and he will then form some idea of the treasures of good water which the chalk contains. It might be worth consideration whether two kinds of water might not be supplied, viz., spring-water for drink, and river-water, which is softer, for cleansing purposes. As a very small proportion of the water is drunk, sufficient might thus be obtained without fetching it from the mountains of Wales.

"One pound of cotton," says Mr. Gordon, "which formerly could only be spun into a thread of 108 yards long, can now, by the application of steam, produce a thread of 167 miles in length."



[JEROME BEFORE SIR GOWER.]

THE WRONG DRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Golden Mask," "The Stranger's Secret," "Man and His Idol," "The Warning Voice," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XL.

MORE THAN SUSPICIOUS.

But that slander, sir,
Is grown a truth now, for it grows again
Fresher than e'er it was.

Henry VIII.

WHEN the steady purpose of years reaches its climax only to encounter ignominious defeat!

When the prize, almost within the grasp, eludes the fingers, and—is gone!

In such an hour one of two states of feeling must result. Despair will prostrate its victim, or he will madden with desperation, and will lose all self-control, all thought of consequences, and tremble on the rage of frenzy.

The latter was the form in which his disappointment affected Vivian Gower.

He had not from the first a question—that is to say, not from the first moment that the idea flashed upon him like an inspiration—but that his kinsman was playing a deep and crafty, though dangerous, game at his expense.

Sir Anselm Gower, he knew, as well as man might be morally certain of anything, was passing off his female child as his son and heir, so that he might secure to himself all the advantages that attended holding important estates in trust for his own offspring, which advantages would otherwise have gone to the other branch of the family.

Proof of this fraud had gradually accumulated.

Looking back, Vivian Gower could see—or rather his sharp little wife, with her forlorn and faded aspect could see—that it would have been better not to have waited for those proofs. It would have been better—as it is generally better in life—to take the open and manly course, and to challenge the baronet to the proof of his rights and claims to the position he held.

The fear of some crafty subterfuge had prevented this honest course.

An attempt had been made to meet subtlety with subtlety, and how had it succeeded?

In the crisis—in the moment of triumph—Sir Gower had been able to point to the boy Oliver, and to say—"This is my son!"

Circumstances enabled him to make this assertion with comparatively little fear of detection.

Oliver's strong likeness to the Gower family was much in his favour. Jacintha had of course calculated on this. The likeness was so close that when Oliver stood forward and confronted those most interested in proving him an impostor they hesitated. They doubted the reality of their own convictions.

"Had the child we saw four years ago grown into a young man this is the appearance he must have presented," they both thought.

And they had no proof of the baronet's duplicity. It was only surmise.

Again and again they had been on the verge of making the discovery which would have settled all; but they had never yet made it. Something had always interposed.

The public history of Oliver's sentence to the Reformatory in the matter of the Indian shawl, would have been enough: although the equally valuable fact that it was to an establishment for young ladies that I had been consigned in Germany might have helped them.

But then they were ignorant of both these simple facts.

And that ignorance was fatal to them.

When after an embarrassing evening the Vivian Gowers retired to their own apartments, the hours they passed there, were agonizing in the intensity of the sense of utter failure and desperation to which they yielded themselves up.

Vivian, who was not a man given to the expression of his emotions, but rather of a secretive turn, hiding strong feelings under a placid exterior, was for once fierce in the expression of his despair.

"We might have avoided this defeat," he exclaimed, reproachfully; "a bold, outspoken course would have secured our rights and at once. We have chosen a secret and artful course, and what has resulted?"

The reproach was not levelled at his wife, but she was greatly perturbed and chose to take it so.

By-the-way, she presented a singular aspect, as she sat in the slowly brightening moonlight. Her evening dress was of grey satin, so faint that it looked almost white, and this, with the colourless face, and neck, and arms, gave her a singularly weird, not to say ghostly look.

"What might have resulted had we chosen that bold, that determined course you now so loudly advocate," she replied, in a tauntingly bitter tone.

"Now?" he repeated, interrogatively.

"Yes, now! You were always wise after the event."

"What?"

"You were always bold and courageous, always

clever and suggestive when the time for action had gone by."

"Martha!"

"When your valour might have displayed itself to some purpose, or your wisdom might have been of practical service, then, and then only, was it always at fault."

Vivian started from his chair.

"You are angry, you are cruel," he burst out.

"I am just," replied his wife. "I speak the bitter, distasteful truth."

"No! You are disappointed and disgusted, and you vent your ill-humour upon me. It is nothing, of course, that I am cheated out of my rights, and remain a poor and obscure man? The evil is, that you should be deprived of the state to which your ambition has always pointed—"

"To which I am entitled," she interposed, with a sigh.

"And the loss of which you attribute to me?"

"Yes."

Flushed and excited into desperation, Vivian Gower presented a striking contrast to the colourless woman in the colourless dress on whom the moonlight was falling, and who might have had moonlight in her veins for any signs of more ruddy fluid circulating therein.

"Like all your sex," ejaculated Vivian, "inconsiderate and unreasonable. Clever at pouting and wrangling, and never satisfied."

"Thank you," she muttered, scornfully.

"I have done wrong, you say—because I have failed. Yet suppose we have been mistaken in our surmises?"

"I will not suppose it."

"Yet you have no proof to the contrary."

"I have my own common sense—"

"Which, likely as not, has misled you from first to last."

"You think so," retorted the lady, spitefully; "you believe then that all this mystery—all this evasion of inspection—all this outraging of the common decencies of life on the part of these people means nothing? You believe that Lady Gower, a proud and ambitious woman, has voluntarily exiled herself from society. Your impression is that without an object, and a powerful one, too, she permits a low, vulgar woman, a foreigner of the worst type, to usurp her authority and insult her in her own drawing-room? And you consider it a proof of my want of common sense, because I differ with you in opinion on this point? As you please. Only understand that we still differ."

"In other words," retorted Vivian, "you do not believe that this is Anselm's son?"

The lady hesitated.

She was not prepared to go quite so far. Believing that there was a mystery, and not precisely knowing where it lay, she paused to think.

Vivian noticed this and was about to remark on it.

While he did so, a sound, occasioned by some unusual stir and commotion, was borne in through the window. There were voices. There was the trampling of feet. It was as if the house was surrounded by a mob; but nothing was visible from the window of that room, which overlooked the garden.

"This is strange!" exclaimed Vivian, forgetting his irritation in his surprise. "So late, too."

"Something serious surely has happened," returned his wife, who rose shining in the moonlight, and looked out with the face of a ghost.

For a time the sound continued; then changed. It was evident that some of the persons had been admitted into the house. Intensely curious, Vivian summoned an attendant, who arrived drowsy and shivering out of his first sleep, and gave but a short answer to the inquiries made of him.

"There's been a murder," he said, "and master is a magistrate, and they've brought in the murderer—waking people out of their sleep."

Beyond this he knew nothing.

There was a panelled room on the ground-floor, with a quaint, and a general air of antiquity about it, in which Sir Gower transacted business. Here he received his tenants on rent days, here meetings connected with turnpike trusts, and such matters as concerned the local gentry were held, and here the baronet often exercised his functions as one of the county justices.

To this room Vivian and his wife betook themselves, entering, as members of the household usually did, through a sliding door in the panel, behind the great chair in which Sir Anselm sat on state occasions.

The room was full and presented a striking appearance.

Two or three wax tapers in silver candleabra, hastily lit, flared and guttered upon a long oaken table in the midst, whilst on either side an oil-lamp suspended from a bracket against the wall shone yellow light. At the extremity of the room, a broad shaft of moonlight streamed in at a window across which a heavy curtain had been only partially drawn.

From these sources of illumination, it was easy to discern that Sir Anselm, wrapped in a scarlet-damasked dressing-gown, and seated in the great chair of justice, formed the central figure.

Yet even he did not attract the attention that was bestowed upon another figure at the opposite end of the table, whose face was not clearly discernible against the background of moonlight.

A village constable, looking much like a gamekeeper, was pointing at this man, and the rest of those present were swaying and crowding round, straining their necks, and standing on tiptoe, in their eagerness to see and hear all that was going on.

"You were saying," the baronet asked, as the visitors entered and stood behind him, "that a carriage was shot at this afternoon, as it passed the road through the Beechdene Coppice?"

"Yes, sir," replied the constable.

"And that a witness—what did you call him?"

"Ruff Wattell."

"I know him, a waggoner on the Beechdene Farm?—was coming through the copse at the moment, saw the shot fired, and the man who fired it run away?"

"That's right."

"Well, and what did Ruff do?"

"Lost sight of him, sir."

A titter went round the room at this instance of the waggoner's cleverness.

"What? he did not attempt pursuit?"

"He run after him," said the constable, after a pause, during which time he was evidently guessing at the probable meaning of "pursuit."

"Oh, he did run; but he did not succeed in catching this man? How was that?"

"Because the leaves blinded him, and he took a strong turn, and he came out by Twolter's Ricks, and the man made clear off by the pits, and got away."

"Well, and what then?"

"As the man as fired the shot made off, the gentleman jumps from the carriage and plunges into the copse. And from that hour to this he hasn't been seen no more."

"The copse has been searched?"

"For hours."

"Thoroughly, and in every part?"

"In every crick and corner?"

"And the gravel-pits?"

"Not a hole in 'em that hasn't been searched through and through."

"It is impossible that any person should remain hidden either among the trees or in the gravel-pits then, according to your impression?"

"Quite impossible."

Sir Anselm reflected.

"This is curious, certainly," he then said; "but now, how do you connect it with the prisoner? Why have you brought him before me?"

"Because he is the companion of the man who fired the shot. They've been lurking about in these parts together, and he was found on the outskirts of the wood, loitering and waiting about there. When took he first denied all knowledge of the other man, and swore he'd heard nothing of the pistol-shot, which everybody miles round had heard of it; and when he found 'twasn't no good standin' it out no longer, he owned as he was waiting for a friend as had give him the slip, which he then led us a wild-goose chase after him, first to one place and then to another, frightening a lady at the Pelican, almost out of her wits, which she said—"

"Thank you, we won't trouble you for the observations of the lady frightened out of her wits at the Pelican," said the baronet, with a smile. "In brief, I suppose you have reason to suspect that this man is the accomplice of the perpetrator of the gross outrage of the afternoon, and as neither his companion nor the individual at whom the pistol was aimed is to be found, you require my authority to detain this man on suspicion of complicity?"

"Just so," said the constable, eagerly.

The next step was the production of the chief witness, Ruff Wattell, the waggoner.

As this personage was a short, red-faced man, with a purple nose, no eyes to speak of, and a thin, straight thatch of grey hair, which he was perpetually smoothing down into his eye-brows, and as he wore a long white frock, so tight that it accommodated itself to his figure in an exaggerated fashion, he presented a singularly comical appearance.

As a witness he had the disadvantage of being hopelessly deaf, so that he heard no questions, and rambled on in a fashion of his own, without the possibility of being stopped.

On one point, however, he was quite clear—he had seen the shot fired, and he was certain that he could identify the man that fired it.

Moreover, he could swear to having seen that man and the prisoner in company together once down by Twolter's Ricks, but that was some time ago, and once, and more recently, "at the Barley Mow beer shop," as he felt it necessary to explain, just down the road, "nigh Mrs. Gutch's—she as had they twins, both livin', as one went out a sailorin', and was bound off the Coast o' Africa, and sent home a chaney washin' tub to his mother, which Squire Paul's housekeeper she gammoned her out o' it, sayin' 'twern't nothin' but common delf, when everybody know'd 'twas real chaney, and worth fifty guineas if 'twas worth a pound, tho' she did give two for it, and serve her right, a old screw, if the burglars did break in 'n smash it through steppin' in to it by way o' the painted winder."

But at this point, by dint of shaking and through several fits being held close to his nose, the garrulous and deaf old man was stopped.

In the course of his incoherent and disconnected ramblings he had used one word which had produced a singular effect on the accused.

It was the word "burglar."

At that he had started in a conscious manner, while singularly enough, Sir Anselm, whose eyes chance to be fixed on him at the moment, had noticed this with a strange show of emotion.

And now that Ruff was silenced, the baronet peered curiously into the half-darkness before him in an attempt to scrutinize the features of the accused.

"Let the prisoner step forward," said the baronet, authoritatively.

The prisoner moved with evident reluctance.

In doing so he came into the full glow of light as shed by the wax-tapers, and his dark face was plainly and clearly discernible.

It was the face of Jerome the burglar.

There could be little question, then, as to the reality of the peril in which he stood, through his relations to Jasper Newton, or as to there being real grounds for the fears that had driven him to seek out Violet Maldon in the faint hope that Jasper had fled to her either out of bravado or appealing to her sympathies towards one in deadly and imminent peril.

For a second only Sir Gower scrutinized the face thus revealed in the strong light, then he started with an exclamation on his lips.

"Why, how is this?" he demanded; "we have met before!"

"Possibly," was the cool answer of the man who had last entered that house in the dead of the night with the most desperate intentions!

"And in this house!" was the baronet's rejoinder.

"You are joking, Sir Anselm. In this house—impossible."

"It is true, and you know it," was the far from cordial reply; "my memory for faces seldom deceives me, and though your appearance is changed—"

"Since I came into my property," retorted the other, with an insolent swagger.

"You forgot yourself," cried Sir Anselm, with severity; "you forget, too, the dangerous position in which you stand. On the evidence before me I might have hesitated about granting a warrant for your detention, since there is no proof of absolute violence having been practised towards the gentleman who has so strangely disappeared; but the offence of which I know you to have been guilty justifies me in the most extreme measures. Therefore—"

He stopped abruptly.

A cry of surprise, breaking the silence of the room, caused him to do so.

He looked round and saw that Oliver had entered and stood like one stricken dumb, gazing intently upon the prisoner, who for his part regarded the intruder as he might have done an apparition.

"One moment, Julius," exclaimed the baronet, in a tone of annoyance; "you see I am engaged."

The prisoner burst into a loud, defiant laugh.

"Pray don't let me detain Master—Julius," he cried on, with an offensive emphasis on the name; "I can wait the pleasure of Master—Julius!"

Oliver heard the words, and looking up regarded the man with a look of terror and dismay. Dread of him was a habit dating from his childhood; but never had he dreaded him as now when he saw that at a word he could destroy all the fabric of deceit and collusion in which he had played such an unwilling part.

Yes, the complication of events had brought about this strange point—that one single word from the lips of that man could ruin everything!

"Strange!"

A single word, and one that might be spoken inadvertently, and not even with a malicious design.

Utterly ignorant of the danger in which he stood, Sir Gower Anselm Gower fiercely resented the words of the ruffian, and would have administered a sharp rebuke to him then and there.

Had he done so and thus provoked a retort, all would have been at an end.

It was Oliver who prevented this catastrophe.

He hastily whispered in the baronet's ear: what he said was inaudible to those standing round, but more than one caught at what sounded like the words, "my father." In all probability those words were used—at all events, the effect of the lad's whisper was astounding. Sir Anselm changed colour, and a tremor as of palsy swept over him.

"This cannot be true!" he gasped.

Oliver whispered an assurance that it was so.

"The fellow knows then that you are playing this part?"

"No; he only knows that you have called me—Julius."

Overwhelmed at the suddenness of this calamity, the baronet tried to think—to determine on some course of action; but his brain was in a whirl. It would not think. Following the habit of years, he looked round for Jacintha—so that she might advise—but she was absent. In place of her eyes encountered those of Vivian's wife, as she stood ghost-like in the gray satin dress, watching the scene with jealous scrutiny. It was Oliver who advised the course eventually taken.

"I was about to say," the trembling baronet resumed, striving to address with dignity the grinning culprit, "that circumstances would have justified me in extreme measures. These, however, I am not prepared to take. Whatever I may happen to know of the past, I have now only to deal with the case before me, and in my judgment there is not sufficient to warrant me in giving an order for your detention. You are discharged."

A murmur of dissatisfaction ran through the room.

Jerome affected not to hear it; but bowing low with assumed humility, said:

"I have to thank your worship for this gentlemanly decision. Any order for my arrest would have been quite unnecessary, *I shall not quit this neighbourhood*. I shall remain here, so as to be always accessible, in case I may be needed. I thank you."

While his lips uttered these words, in a soft, mellifluous tone, his eyes were dark and threatening. They were the eyes of a man who felt his power and meant to use it.

Without knowing exactly the part the boy Oliver played in this dark and mysterious drama, he caught at sufficient to serve as a clue to his course of action.

He saw that there were duplicity, simulation, and it might be some darker crime.

He could not but see that the man who would have treated him like a dog was moved by sudden fear and a desire to be rid of him.

That was enough.

The crafty and subtle Italian needed no more.

"I shall not quit this neighbourhood," expressed a firm though suddenly formed resolve.

With that he walked, with a bold, manly, and dignified step, from the justice-room out into the hall.

There, with a cloak thrown over her bright, glimmering dress, Vivian's wife awaited him.

CHAPTER XLII.

GROWING APPREHENSIONS.

Death lurks in trifles. Now, who would suspect That here, in this fair glass of water, fresh From the clear brook, poison might lurk? And yet I dare not raise it to my lips! Oh, to be thus surrounded and waylaid, Suspecting ever, ever finding cause For multiplied suspicion—tis a state That should make welcome even the fate I dread. For death is peace, and in the grave is rest. Oh, rest and peace, how do I fear, yet long. To come to your embraces. *M.S. Tragedy.*

KNOWING nothing of this momentous occurrence in the dead of the night, Tadge and I awoke only to the startling fact of the disappearance of Violet Maldon.

For that occurrence we could in no way account.

Inquiry showed that no person had been to the inn—there were no traces of its being entered surreptitiously—and thus the idea of anything like violent abduction was out of the question.

But then, on the other hand, what possible reason was there why one so good, so considerate, and so confiding should abruptly quit those to whom she was attached without one word of explanation?

That seemed most unlikely.

The she would have been certain, we agreed, to have considered our uneasiness, especially after a day of such perils, and when the doubtful fate of Albany Seymour was enough in itself to create dire alarm and apprehension.

Then again—for we were never tired of suggesting fresh difficulties—was Violet's disappearance connected with Albany's fate! Or was it entirely owing to a distinct set of circumstances?

Who could say?

We had up the landlady and questioned her. She was not altogether pleased at the loss of one of her best customers, and at finding us left on her hands, in addition to an unpaid bill. But in time she grew reasonable, in the conviction that "something must turn up," and she then proceeded to tell us all she knew, namely, that in the morning one of the doors of the inn was found unlocked.

Nothing more.

In this emergency, I questioned Tadge as to what she knew of the young couple's intentions in coming into these parts? She could only say that they sought obscurity and freedom from pursuit, and that having heard me speak of Devon with rapture, they had departed for the neighbourhood I had described, into which, as it now appeared, they had been followed.

There was not much to be gathered from this.

It in fact threw no light on the mystery, and we had no alternative but to wait the issue of events. All that morning, great excitement prevailed as to what had become of Albany—as to the capture of Jerome, of which we then first heard—as to his being left to go free, a step that met with general disapproval—and lastly, as to the strange occurrence in which we were so deeply interested.

Later on, quite a commotion was caused by the arrival of a letter addressed to Violet; but with an intimation that it might be opened in her absence.

Two points in regard to this letter were significant. It was addressed to Violet, but it was in her own handwriting!

Then it did not read as through the post, but had been given by a boy to a lout of an under-ostler, who had delivered it to us.

Without hesitation I tore it open, and read:

"MY DEAR JULIA AND TADGE.—Do not be alarmed. I am doing well, and in no danger. My wound pains me a little, but is of no consequence.

"The cause of my abrupt departure I will explain when we meet, as by heaven's blessing I hope we soon shall do.

"Institute no inquiries; be patient; you shall know all.

"The ways of Providence are wonderful, and past finding out.

"Inclosed I send you several notes, out of which please defray all charges, and, if possible, remain at the inn until I have it in my power to appoint some other place to which you may betake yourselves. It is my earnest wish that Julia should remain under my protection, at least for the present.

"I write this to myself, giving you the power to open it in my absence, because, as your names are unknown at the inn, it is the surest course, in order that the letter may reach you.—Adieu, ever sincerely,

"VIOLET MALDON."

The mystery of the writing was, so far, explained.

As to the delivery of the letter by hand, that might have been arranged so as to prevent any disclosure that a post-mark would afford.

For the letter itself, that simply intensified the Egyptian darkness in which we remained as to the cause and nature of the step it alluded to, but did not explain.

One purpose the letter certainly answered. It relieved our minds of apprehension. Beyond this it did not go.

After such a communication there was but one course open to us—namely, that of waiting for farther instructions.

I for one could well afford to wait. My life had come to a sudden stand. What lay beyond?

There was my own wild dream that I might one day become Oliver's wife; but it was only a dream, and I saw my way to nothing that savoured more of reality.

In one direction only a ray of light stole in as to the future.

Oliver had by my most free will and consent usurped my place in the home from which I had been banished.

But was I to suppose that from the moment he was installed there in my place no farther thought would be given to me?

It was not likely.

For years my mother had regarded me with an ever-increasing tenderness of affection; but apart from that, policy alone dictated that I should be looked to and cared for.

My return to Gorewood Place might any hour frustrate the most elaborate arrangements.

Suppose I returned and declared Oliver an imposter?

What I could tell of my child-life was sufficient to support my declaration.

This must be known and taken into consideration. It was not likely that Jacintha would endanger her clever scheme by an oversight of this kind.

Jacintha!

At the bare thought of that ambitious, cruel, and unscrupulous woman, I shuddered.

Had I not made her my foe?

Too certainly I had done so, and I knew enough of her vindictive nature not to feel perfectly assured that she never forgot—and never forgave. I had charged her with no less a crime than murder. In her heart she knew that I still deemed her guilty, and that the facts as I could tell them would point to her guilt with a distinctness not easily to be overcome. And now here was a fresh danger, a fresh reason why my idle tongue should be silenced.

Instinctively I felt as if some danger from this source awaited me.

"While I live," I argued, "there is danger; by my death Oliver's place would be secured. I have been over in the way, I am now still more so—what is to prevent my removal?"

Nothing is easier in a depressed state of mind than to brood over a morbid idea until it impresses one with all the force of reality.

So it was with this impression as to the fate to which I was doomed.

I would sit looking from the window of the inn which commanded a long, busy road, and watching the people who came and went, more especially the young, with a melancholy interest, questioning why of all others I, so full of life and animation and the capabilities of enjoyment, I who had no stronger ambition than the happiness of domestic seclusion, should be thus hunted down by a destiny that threatened my very existence.

At times the vivacious Tadge, whom nothing could depress, nothing sober into melancholy, would rally me upon what she would term my "moping," and endeavour to arouse me by means of her favourite adage that "care killed a cat." I did not contest the point with her, for indeed, how could I do so? How could I enter into an explanation of such family affairs as ours even with this good, honest, sympathetic creature?

To all the world my lips were sealed.

My present security lay in the conviction that even Jacintha knew nothing of my retreat. Under this impression I refused to quit the inn, even for a minute, lest I might be recognized.

I was also very cautious in going near the windows, but my love of fresh air, and the interest of the scene round the inn and of the road, often proved too strong in the way of temptation, and I sometimes ventured to take a look-out.

Thus it came about that one evening I leant from the window of our room, bending over the sill, with my chin in the hollow of my hand, watching a glorious sunset. The beauty of it charmed me, while the radiance dazzled my eyes. While I gazed I resigned myself, unconsciously, to one of my gloomy reveries, and the result was, that having looked too long at the resplendent glow in the west, when I

withdrew my gaze, I was all but blinded. Bright spots of emerald and amethyst danced before my eyes, and it was some time before the common objects before me were distinctly visible.

When I did escape from this effect, and while I stood gazing across the road, I suddenly became aware of someone returning my gaze and with interest.

It was a man, who stood with open eyes and open mouth, indulging in a stare of unequalled intensity, and apparently struck dumb with amazement.

Could I be the object of his attention?

Though I decided that I was not, yet I hastily withdrew from the window, and in the gloom of the room soon recovered the effects of the brilliance on which I had so heedlessly gazed.

All that while the thought of the man I had seen troubled me. I fancied myself watched—I fancied, in truth, a hundred things, for my mind was in a state to be fertile in causes of alarm.

At last I went again to the window, and again looked down into the street.

The man was gone.

Greatly relieved, I troubled myself no more about him, and so an hour passed away—two hours it might have been—without my mind reverting to the subject.

Then it so happened that I was passing along the passage which divided our sleeping-chamber from the room in which we lived, when I was startled by a familiar voice sounding at the bar of the inn at the bottom of the stairs.

"Hullo!" was the simple word uttered.

I recognized the exclamation instantly.

"Hullo!" to you, sir," returned another voice, "and how's Dan this evening?"

Dan! Yes; it was he. It was the brutal ruffian from whose grasp Jasper Newton had once so unmercifully rescued me. I knew the voice, and then, like a flash of light, the conviction came over me that I had already seen the face that day.

It was Dan who had stared up at the window from the opposite side of the road!

Had he recognized me? That was the question. Years had flown since our last meeting: then I was a child, and now I had passed on to the verge of womanhood. Was it possible that he could identify me? Was it not more probable that he had received some recent description, and had, in fact, been set out to watch me?

In either case his presence there filled me with apprehension, and caused me to watch with nervous anxiety every time the door opened.

Nothing, however, resulted that night.

Though I listened, I failed to hear anything further of the gruff voice or of the favourite mode of address which this taciturn ruffian was accustomed to indulge in.

Only in my sleep that night I more than once heard the gruff "Hullo!" and started up in terror, only to find the moonlight filling the great chamber, and Tadge sleeping by my side as placidly as an infant sleeps.

It was far on in the next day, and when I had begun to recover from the effect of Dan's presence in that house, though not from the general apprehensions to which I was becoming a prey, when a letter was brought in addressed to me in the name that had become familiar to me—that of Julia Norton.

At a glance I saw that it was from Violet.

Unlike her former letter, however, it had come by post, and my first impression was that it had reached me from a distance. But in this I was mistaken. It bore the Gorewood post-mark.

The letter was short; but couched in affectionate terms.

It informed me that the writer, for reasons which would hereafter be explained, was still unable to trust me with the secret of her retreat; but that she desired to see me as much for her own sake as for mine. She therefore asked that I would meet her that night at the house of a friend—a little villa recently erected about a mile from the inn through the coppice; but rather farther by road. Every particular was given to enable me to find this place, and in a postscript I was asked not to mention my expedition to Tadge, as the object of it was personal to myself, and Tadge might insist on accompanying me, which Violet did not desire. She had her reasons, Violet added, of which further when we met.

This letter excited no suspicions in my mind.

Not for an instant did I question its genuineness, nor did the state of apprehension in which I lived prepare me to regard it as in any way singular or alarming. That Violet should write to me was natural: that she should request this secret interview was at least as rational as her own act in quitting the inn so suddenly and without a word of explanation.

But I did not argue out the matter at all: there was the letter in her handwriting, as I believed, and in it she asked me to do a certain thing.

That was enough.

I thought only how I might do it in the way she had desired.

So, mentioning nothing to Tadge, I waited with impatience till night came—it was a cloudy night, though the moon occasionally broke forth in splendour—then I watched my opportunity, and starting out of the inn, darted down the road in the direction I had been instructed to take.

My first impulse was to go through the coppice; but I reflected that I knew the way but imperfectly, and might easily lose myself among the trees. So I pursued my course along the highway, meeting no one and encountering no molestation.

The excitement of the adventure made the way seem short; but as I drew near my destination I hesitated—I knew not why. Perhaps it was the sight of the house, which—buried in trees, which had a funeral aspect in the night—had anything but an inviting air about it.

However, I mustered up courage, entered the garden, and reaching the door, knocked timidly.

The heavy steps of a shambling man-servant came echoing along the hall, and I could tell that the fellow was pulling on his coat as he came. Grumbling sullenly, he shot several bolts, and undid a heavy chain.

Then the door opened, and I stood face to face with him.

It was Dan!

Terror took away my breath.

I could not ask if Violet were there.

"Hello!" cried the monster, with a triumphant leer.

At the same moment another voice from an inner room called out:

"Who is that?"

This voice was also familiar to me, and I was not surprised—no, that is not the word—I was simply horror-stricken as out of the gloom there emerged—Gaspar!

(To be continued.)

VIVIAN TRAVERS.

CHAPTER XXV.

The philosopher's slumbers were of several hours' duration, and when he awoke he found himself in the midst of darkness, evening having long since fallen. Reproaching himself audibly for so long neglecting his young guest, he arose, and was endeavouring to make his way to the door, when a gentle knock sounded, and Vivian appeared, candle in hand.

To her tender inquiries as to his health, he replied that the pain in the arm had shifted to his head.

She was expressing her sympathy, when Sir William rushed in excitedly, barking joyously around his master, whom he seemed desirous of conducting from the room.

"What ails Sir William?" inquired the philosopher. "He does not seem at all like himself. Will you be good enough to help him to something out of the basin, Vivian?"

The maiden smiled, replying:

"He has already had his supper, uncle; and, if you are ready, you and I will now have ours."

"You should not have waited for me, Vivian. Our frugal meals do not require ceremony."

He followed her into the adjoining room, set out the basin containing the remains of the dinner, and then, bidding her help herself, he withdrew to the kitchen, bathed his head and smoothed his hair.

When he returned he found that the maiden had not touched the proffered food, and he was beginning a homily, when she interrupted him, saying:

"Before we eat our supper, uncle, I want to show you my room. It is quite finished."

Without waiting for a reply, she extinguished the light, threw off her cloak, and led the way into the hall, preceded by the dog, which was barking vociferously.

Along the hall, from which the dust no longer arose at every step, and which gave back distinct echoes at each tread upon the bare floor, Vivian led her host to the parlour door, and there she paused, her hand on the knob.

"We ought to have brought the candle," muttered the philosopher.

Vivian waited a moment to give effect to the display, and then flung open the door.

The philosopher rubbed his eyes in amazement, persuading himself that he beheld a scene of enchantment.

The lofty drawing-room had been made worthy its title.

The damp, discoloured walls had been swept and hung with ruddy silk from the very centre of the ceiling to the floor, where it was met by a handsome carpet of green and crimson. The windows were

draped with ruddy-hued damask, which met in the centre, shutting out all sights and sounds of the street, and shutting in all the warmth and glow of the room. Easy-chairs, cushions for the feet, &c., abounded. A carved bookcase stood in one corner, and already contained the choicest works of Mr. Aynscourt's library. There was a damask-covered couch drawn up before a cheery fire that blazed in the grate, sending forth light and heat and pleasantness in equal measure.

But this was not all.

In the centre of the room, out of the line of the door, and therefore not noticed at first by the bewildered philosopher, stood a round table laden with a bounteous supper.

It was set for two, and displayed a quantity of sparkling glass, silver, and fine old china. In the centre was a large globe lamp, shaded; and by the lamp was a vase of fresh, odorous flowers. Before the plate, evidently designed for the host, was a roast chicken smoking hot, and a boiled ham. Before the plate of the mistress of the entertainment were cups and saucers, a quaint and battered silver sugar-bowl, cream-cup, &c., and a silver tea-kettle, which steamed merrily over a little fluid lamp.

The silver and china Hugh Aynscourt recognized as having been given him by his parents as a bridal present, on the eve of the day upon which he should have been married.

After finding himself jilted, he had thrown them aside with other useless things, and had completely forgotten their existence.

"Well?" said Vivian, inquiringly, when he had gazed full ten minutes upon the wonderful scene without a word.

Her voice aroused him, and he turned and regarded her.

Never in all her brilliant triumphs at ball or party had Vivian been more radiant than at that moment. A glow of pleasure on her cheek and in her eyes, a happy smile on her lips, her curls thrown carelessly back from her forehead and secured by a flower, her bare shoulders gleaming above her costly robe, which trailed upon the carpet after her in queenly fashion, she took the philosopher's heart captive completely.

"It is very nice here," he began, hesitatingly, not knowing what to say, and whether he had not better abjure his Spartan ideas on the spot and turn his back for ever upon Diogenes. "I—I like it—"

He paused as the barking of Sir William met his ear, and turned, expecting to encounter a look of reproach from his sagacious eyes. But the dog having attracted his attention, wagged his tail approvingly, as it seemed to him, and ran towards the fire, throwing himself upon a velvet rug which he had evidently appropriated to his own comfort and use.

He lay there basking in the fire-light with such appreciation and enjoyment of his new quarters that Vivian laughed merrily, and the philosopher himself smiled.

"Supper is ready," then said the maiden, with a charming assumption of matronly air. "A cup of tea will do your head good, uncle."

The bewildered bachelor was on the point of replying that he would gladly partake of a dose of hemlock at her hands, but she prevented him by leading him to his seat and then taking her own.

He thought he must be dreaming as he watched her pour out the tea, putting in a liberal supply of sugar and cream, and dish out some of the most tempting preserves he had ever seen.

He was aroused to a sense of his duties by her request for some of the chicken, and he would have laid the entire fowl upon her plate, had she not laughingly specified how large a portion and what part she preferred.

The poor philosopher began to feel quite fatherly as he watched his lovely young guest and listened to her sweet, rippling laugh. He drank half-a-dozen cups of tea, at the least, in his enjoyment of that unaccustomed beverage and of her society, and was surprised to discover that his palate appeared to appreciate the flavour of the conserves and other dainties.

They lingered more than an hour over the supper-table, and then Vivian begged her host to take possession of the couch, which he did, declaring that the tea had cured his headache.

He watched her as, after pinning up her dress and fastening a new unhemmed towel in front of her, she piled up the dishes and set a small copper kettle on the hob.

She chatted merrily as she washed the dishes, a feat she had never tried before, wiped them and put them in a neat closet, and then spread a crimson cover upon the table, and restored her dress to its former splendour.

There had been neither pain nor bitterness to Hugh Aynscourt in seeing those old bridal presents of his brought out, and he now inquired how and where she had found them.

"In the attic," was the reply and Vivian put a soft

cushion under the philosopher's head and began bathing it in Cologne water.

"You see, uncle, I was looking around for such things and found these. I employed a man to wash the dishes and clean the silver, which was dreadfully tarnished, and he didn't injure a thing. There! Are you sure your head is cured?"

By way of finish, as he assented, she held the perfume-bottle to his nostrils, and then sprinkled several drops over his garments.

"I haven't shown you all my improvements, uncle," she then said. "Follow me!"

The philosopher arose, as did Sir William, and Vivian then exhibited a bed-room off the drawing-room, the walls of which were festooned with silk, the windows handsomely curtained, the floor carpeted. A low French bedstead of black walnut, furnished with hair mattresses, fine linen, snowy Marseilles counterpanes and plump pillows, stood at a little distance from the wall. The remainder of the furniture was in keeping.

"This is your room," said Vivian, smiling at his ill-concealed delight. "Now come and see mine."

She conducted him back to the drawing-room to a bed-chamber, in a line with his, similarly furnished.

"Did you get all these things out of the money I gave you, Vivian?"

"Yes, and had some left. Didn't I do well to furnish so much in one day? The men worked like heroes because I promised them triple pay, but they deserve it easy to perceive that the philosopher was pleased as well as surprised at the change in his surroundings, and Vivian felt amply repaid for her labour in witnessing his satisfaction.

"You ought to have a housekeeper, uncle," she said, as they returned to the drawing-room, and the philosopher was prevailed upon to recline on the couch. "I can't cook, you know, and just look at my fingers."

She exhibited a tiny blister upon one of her fingers, at sight of which her host declared emphatically that a housekeeper was necessary.

"We ought to get one to-morrow, so that she can cook for us," resumed Vivian, "and make the beds, and do the hard work. Don't you know any good woman, uncle?"

The philosopher declared that he certainly did not, but he almost immediately checked himself, adding:

"And yet I am not sure but I do. I know of one poor enough and pretty sensible. Her name is Myrtle Osmyne, and she sews for a living."

"Is she the only woman with whom you are acquainted?"

"The only one besides yourself."

"I think I'll go and call on her in the morning."

The philosopher made a very wry face, and the maiden proposed to read to him from his favourite authors.

"Not to night," he replied. "Let us talk of Philip, your parents, and yourself."

Vivian introduced the subject and they talked long, she becoming more and more encouraged in her efforts to interest him and change the manner of his life.

She sang to him, and made herself so perfectly charming that he experienced a pang of regret when the clock struck eleven, and, with a good-night kiss to him, and a kind word to the dog, she retired to her sleeping-room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The morning subsequent to the metamorphosis in his dwelling the philosopher awoke as early as usual, but lay a long time in bed, accustoming himself to the unusual luxuries surrounding him.

The soft, springing bed, the fine linen, the yielding pillows, were all appreciated by him as something quite new and strange, and his gaze wandered about the room, dwelling upon each article of the neat furniture approvingly.

The previous evening he had resolved to rid himself of these "useless luxuries," on the departure of his young guest, and this morning he soliloquized:

"I suppose I must send these things up to the attic when Vivian goes; but meanwhile I'll enjoy them. After all, they are pleasant. I wonder that I have lived as I have done so many years."

With a sigh, he at length stepped out upon the thick rug beside his bed, discovering upon a chair a suit of new clothing, complete even to linen, hose, and slippers, and these he donned with the impression that Vivian was a magician.

Habit was strong upon him, and he was about to make his way to the kitchen to perform his morning ablutions, when he suddenly remembered the toilet articles upon the wash-stand.

Having made use of them—new combs, and brush, scented soap and fine towels—he was astonished at the improvement in his personal appearance, and with

newly awakened pride in his hitherto despised body, proceeded to the drawing-room.

Sir William, from his cosy rug in front of the fire, barked joyously at his entrance, seeming quite undecided whether or not to rise. He concluded to do so, however, jumping around the philosopher with remarkable antics, considering his usual gravity, and then returned to his rug.

Vivian, bright and happy as a sunlit summer morning, came forward with a kiss, and escorted her host to the arm-chair.

"You are not to consider yourself a useless member of society, uncle," she said, merrily. "While you enjoy the fire, which burned beautifully all night, I want you to watch the coffee boil. You must share the responsibility of the coffee, for I never made it but once, and that was at a picnic. And here is something for you."

She handed him the morning paper, and proceeded, in the busiest manner, to toast some muffins before the grate, shading her face with the magazine.

"Did you go out for the paper and those other things, Vivian?" inquired her host, in a tone of anxiety. "Those people may have been on the watch—"

"But I didn't go out, uncle," was the laughing rejoinder. "I hunted for the most soiled paper and decrepit pen in your unequalled assortment of such things, and addressed a note to the restaurant-keeper, in a handwriting that I flatter myself resembles yours. At any rate, I signed your name, and with the end of the penholder, the pen becoming too difficult to manage. This note I fastened to Sir William's collar, and, by way of answer, a tall waiter brought a big tray here, laden with everything I ordered. These he set just inside the door, departing without having seen me or the improvements that have taken place here."

The philosopher smiled, expressing his pleasure at these arrangements, and then exclaimed :

"But Sir William's collar? He has none. I would not so degrade his spirit as to put upon him a badge of slavery—"

He paused, his gaze falling upon a band of blue ribbon encircling the neck of his canine friend, and tied in a flourishing bow at the top.

He was about to express a severe opinion of the maiden's audacity, when he observed that the dog appeared proud of his decoration, and he forthwith bestowed a word of praise upon the thoughtful attention.

"Come, uncle, breakfast is ready," said Vivian, after fluttering to and fro a few moments. "When we have finished it, we will call upon Miss Osmyn."

The philosopher took his place at the table with some alacrity, the tempting odours of bacon and eggs, toasted muffins, and genuine Mocha coffee severally and unitedly besieging his senses.

"There is no plate for Sir William?" he observed, helping his guest to the thinnest, rustiest bit of bacon and the whitest egg.

"No," answered Vivian, quietly, yet with a spark of mischief in her eyes. "Sir William breakfasted before we did."

The philosopher looked up inquiringly, as if with the idea that his fair young housekeeper disconcerted the treatment of Sir William as a friend and equal, but, with the mental observation that she had too much sense for that, he dismissed it, quite satisfied with her actions.

The breakfast-table was enlivened by Vivian, who chatted gaily, as she was wont to do at home. Her host would have led her to grave subjects and philosophical discussions, but, with pretty willfulness, she talked of current topics, of this and that politician, of new books, of which Mr. Aynscourt had not heard, of popular authors, showing in all her remarks a native good sense, and a thorough cultivation, that ranked her in the philosopher's mind with the heretofore unequalled Hypatia.

Breakfast over, she gave him an hour or two in which to peruse the morning paper, which he did with considerable pleasure, looking for the names she had mentioned, and evincing much surprise at the various columns of news.

During his twenty years of asceticism he had scarcely seen a newspaper, and had had no desire to see one, deeming his connection with the present race to be completely insulated.

Vivian had awakened his curiosity in his contemporaries, however, and he found the journal anything but a bore.

When he laid it aside, he saw that the breakfast was cleared away, the hearth neatly brushed, and a general air of comfort prevalent.

But he missed his young guest.

He was about to call her when she made her appearance from her bed-room, her dress pinned up in fanciful festoons over her tucked petticoats, and her cloak on her arm.

"Come, uncle," she said, "it is time for us to go.

As I do not like to be seen in the street by my enemies, I wish you would get a carriage and have it driven up to the door. There is a large gate, I see, that was once used for carriages, and a grass-grown drive through the yard."

The philosopher demurred, protesting that he would rather return to his former mode of existence than to have Mrs. Osmyn in his house; but Vivian overruled his objections, and he arose to obey.

Vivian brought him his hat—a new one, in keeping with his garments—and staff, demanding a reward for the care she had taken with his toilet.

"You shall have your reward when Philip comes," replied her host, with an unusual attempt at plausibility. "My obstinate nephew shall be your prize—"

Vivian placed her hand over his lips, blushing and smiling, and he departed, his heart full of the warmth which she had kindled.

He returned with a carriage, which managed to find its way to the door through the long-disguised gate and along the almost-forgotten drive.

Vivian, cloaked and hooded, came out of the house as the vehicle stopped, and entered it so quickly that the driver did not even catch a glimpse of her features.

"The key is in the door, uncle," she said, settling herself comfortably upon the broad seat.

"But Sir William?" exclaimed the philosopher.

"I don't see him."

"Because he is taking care of the house," was the reply. "He perfectly understands his responsibility, and does not wish to go."

This assertion was sustained by Sir William, who rushed out of the drawing-room at the sound of his master's voice, barking as he came, and then retreated with a most important air, as if he felt the full weight of the responsibilities resting upon him.

Quite satisfied, Mr. Aynscourt locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and entered the carriage, giving the necessary orders to the coachman.

A constant and vigilant look-out from the nearly closed windows assured the philosopher that Vivian's enemies were not lurking in the vicinity, and he assured her that he believed their investigations and scrutiny to be confined to the Travers mansion.

In due time they reached the residence of Myrtle Osmyn, and her host begged Vivian to go up alone to the seamstress's room, declaring that he should certainly contradict her invitations and offers, if he once caught sight of the snarling and fretful old lady, who was at once the mother and mistress of Miss Osmyn.

Vivian left him in the carriage, when the coachman's knock had brought a maid to the door, and as ascribed to Miss Osmyn's rooms.

An invitation to enter greeted her knock, and she obeyed it, finding herself in the bare, ill-furnished, but neat sitting-room of the seamstress.

Myrtle was seated by a window, busily engaged upon the embroidered opera-cloak which, at the moment of the visitor's appearance, was receiving the last touch in the shape of a white ribbon at the throat.

She dropped her work on seeing Vivian, and arose and placed a chair for her, and then proceeded to fold her cloak while waiting to hear the maiden's errand.

A glance around the room showed the young girl that the woman was quite alone, and she said, hardly knowing how or where to begin:

"My errand may seem rather singular, Miss Osmyn, but I am sure you will help me if you can. I am in search of a housekeeper for my uncle, and offer you the situation if you would like it. If not, perhaps you can recommend someone."

"A housekeeper!" exclaimed Miss Osmyn, in evident surprise. "I don't know that I should suit your uncle, Miss—"

"I daresay you would. He is the gentleman who rescued you from the insults of two or three young men lately."

"Is he your uncle?" cried Myrtle, a flush of pleasure deepening on her cheek. "I would do almost anything to please him. But I thought he was poor," she added, doubtfully, her glance spying out Vivian's costly robe.

"He is not poor, but very eccentric," answered the maiden, pleased with the appearance of the seamstress. "You must have observed his peculiarities—or some of them. If you choose to become his housekeeper, as I am empowered to treat with you, you will exchange a life of drudgery with the needle, for a pleasant home and many of the luxuries of life. You will receive any reasonable pay you may demand, will have free range of the house and a very neglected garden, which you can beautify to suit yourself, can have books and papers to read, and will be always treated as a lady."

"What a change from my present life!" involuntarily murmured the seamstress, Vivian's picture arousing

the long-repressed longings of her soul. "You offer me a paradise, miss."

"And that is not all," continued Vivian; "you can bring your mother with you. She will have all the comforts—"

She paused, a change coming over the patient face of the seamstress, who simply said:

"My mother is dead!"

The quiet tone in which these words were uttered almost confounded the young girl, who looked in vain for any signs of mourning either in the face or costume of Myrtle. But she did not fail to observe a few lines about the eyes and mouth that betokened recent suffering and present resignation, and in Myrtle's subdued manner she read a quiet faith and touching patience.

Without offering any consolation where she felt sure it was not needed, Vivian remarked:

"You have nothing, then, to prevent your accepting my uncle's offer. Will you come?"

Myrtle assented, adding:

"I can come to-day as well as any time. This work is finished, and I have only to get rid of my furniture, my landlady having promised to take it. My mother being dead, I do not need so much room as I have here, and I have packed up everything, intending to take one small room elsewhere, where I shouldn't be reminded of her."

Vivian gave the philosopher's name and address, and Miss Osmyn then poured forth her thanks in an earnest tone, which Vivian cut short by announcing her immediate departure.

"I will be at your uncle's in the course of an hour or two," said Myrtle, following her visitor to the head of the stairs. "Heaven bless you and him for thinking of giving the situation to me!"

With these words ringing in her ears, the maiden descended the stairs and returned to the carriage, where the philosopher said, as he admitted her:

"Well?"

"She is coming, uncle. She is delighted at the prospect of being your housekeeper."

Mr. Aynscourt smiled, then groaned.

"Did—did you speak to her of putting her terrible mother in the attic, Vivian?"

"No, uncle. Her mother won't trouble us. She is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed the old man, uneasily. "I thought such people never died—only lived on as a scourge to humanity. Dead, eh? I suppose that she is dead."

"Myrtle seems a very sensible and intelligent woman, and I already like her."

"Do you?" and the philosopher's countenance brightened. "I think a great deal of your opinion, Vivian. You are equal to Hypatia in every respect, and if you could only teach the great doctrines of philosophy, you would be quite perfect."

"But, uncle," said Vivian, gravely, "there are other ways of teaching the truth than by proclaiming it by word of mouth in Athenian groves and classic porches or porches. I think our lives can testify to their beauty, and to our appreciation of them. I think that in acts of charity, in storing our minds with truest wisdom, in cultivating our immortal faculties, in making others happy by our constant kindness and consideration, we are teaching the truest, the purest, the highest philosophy."

Mr. Aynscourt looked as though he had received a revelation, and he was silent some time, during which Vivian quietly listened to the rattling of the carriage over the streets, her mind intent upon the subject under discussion.

At length the old man remarked:

"But, Vivian, you can't deny that the life I have led, denying myself, and mortifying my appetite, is nobler than the luxurious lives around us."

"It is nobler, uncle, because your motives were noble," was the response; "but is it not wrong to dwarf and cripple the body, which was given us for wise purposes, that the soul may be cultivated at its expense? Is it not better to elevate and ennoble both? You have nearly starved and frozen yourself during the severe winters, and your body has been present continually in your thoughts, even interfering with your studies. Would it not have been better for the faculties you sought to cultivate if you had studied by a pleasant fire, and eaten pleasant food? Your mind would then have been free from personal thoughts—"

"You are right," murmured the philosopher, in a low tone, that was full of self-condemnation. "The very means I took to repress my body kept it continually in mind, to the exclusion of higher subjects. I have greatly erred."

His head fell on his breast, and he remained in self-communion until they drove up to his own door.

When he assisted Vivian from the carriage, she heard him mutter:

"From the lips of a mere girl I have been truthfully condemned—yes, yes, she is right."

He unlocked the door, ushering her into the house, then paid the driver liberally, and followed her to the drawing-room.

"I suppose, Vivian," he said, taking the arm-chair she offered him, "that you don't approve of my living alone here, as I have always done?"

"I do not," answered the young girl, fearlessly. "I think no one has a right to bury himself or herself in seclusion, forgetful of the duties they owe to their fellows. What a world would this be if every individual were as surely as a bear, thinking only of himself? We are all somewhat dependent upon each other, and we ought to discharge our obligations to mankind."

"But I am under no obligations to mankind, Vivian."

"Are you not rich, uncle?"

"Yes—in money."

"And yet you live here like a miser. Suppose you were to fit up your house in accordance with your means, improve your garden, and furnish the place handsomely. You would immediately create activity among the maids, the carpenters, the painters, the furniture-dealers, and many more, and make the family of many a poor workman happy by the employment of the father—would you not?"

"I suppose so."

"Then is it not your duty to do so? You can make a hundred persons happier, yourself included, and are you not under obligations by laws of humanity to do so?"

Fearful that she had said too much, or that her arguments would be refuted by some trenchant remark from the philosopher, Vivian kissed his forehead and retired to her own room.

"How blind I have been," thought the philosopher, when he had reviewed her words. "Vivian is the true philosopher, despite my self-admiration. Instead of converting her, she has converted me!"

This conclusion was not arrived at without self-humiliation, and, wishing to retire even from the gaze of Sir William, he went into his bed-room, locking himself in.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The servant who had informed Hugh Aynscourt of Percy Lorimer's departure, accompanied by Dennis, the faithful servitor of the Travers's, had spoken truthfully.

Fearing that total inactivity would cause him to be suspected of knowing something of Vivian's whereabouts, foreseeing that her parents and lover would soon return home, and desirous of appearing solicitous for the recovery of the missing maiden, Lorimer had summoned Dennis to a consultation, informing him that he had reason to believe that he knew where Vivian was, and proposing to go in search of her.

Dennis gladly acceded to this request, and attended Lorimer to a place in the neighbourhood, where the lawyer pretended to search unremittingly for his cousin, whom, of course, he failed to discover.

A couple of days were thus spent in the search.

The evening after his return, as soon as the shadows fell over the city sufficiently to conceal his movements, Lorimer took his way to the cottage of Mrs. Hawkers.

Admitting himself with the key in his possession, he found himself in the unlighted hall. Muttering an exclamation upon the ex-actress for not lighting her house properly, he stumbled upstairs to the front room.

Here a lamp burned dimly, and by its light he perceived a strange and unexpected spectacle.

Upon the lounge lay Ocher Roffey, with discoloured face, bruised head and hands, and feverish aspect, while upon the bed, her garments stained with blood, was his mother.

"What does this mean?" demanded the visitor, looking from one to the other.

A moan from the bed was the only reply elicited, and he repeated the question, with increasing alarm and consternation.

"Is it you, Mr. Lorimer?" asked Mrs. Hawkers, faintly. "Come nearer."

The lawyer wonderingly obeyed, approaching her, closely enough to perceive a wound upon her throat and another upon her shoulder, both of which had jagged, uneven edges, as if made by teeth.

"Why, how did this happen?" he cried.

The ex-actress faintly gasped out a story in extreme bodily agony, to the effect that robbers, with a ferocious dog, had entered their cottage, and that she and her son, while defending their lives and property, had received their present terrible injuries.

The lawyer could not wholly believe this story, but affecting to do so, he inquired, anxiously:

"Where is Vivian?"

"Gone!"

"Gone? What do you mean?"

The woman gaspingly reiterated her declaration. Alarmed, Lorimer strode into Vivian's late room, the door of communication being unlocked, and was not long in observing the broken lock and the knife by means of which the maiden had effected her escape.

(To be continued.)

THE KNIGHT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER X.

It was late that night when a veiled figure sprang from a boat which had just shot down the Thames, and glided through a postern-gate leading into the room—it was Maud Ruthven.

Cautionily she stole along the winding passages, only dimly lighted as yet, and concealed herself in the arm which draped the chamber where she had visited Blanche L'Estrange when her royal protectress begged her to bear her company, and peered into the room.

What a scene met her gaze—a scene that long haunted her sleeping and waking dreams. Blanche was leaning back in a great carved chair, which had been a favourite seat of the queen's during her stay at Whitehall; her rich hair was banded away from the Greek brow, and her face wore a beauty touching to behold. Her slight figure was draped in a white dressing-gown, bordered with delicate fur, and a gorgeous cashmere shawl folded about her gave tone and colour to the picture.

Beside her stood the Earl of Lennox, and a gentleman, who she doubted not had been called in, with the French *bonne* and two or three servants, to act as witness to the wedding, indicated by the presence of a clergyman, who in surplice and bands, and with prayer-book in hand, was waiting to commence the ceremony. Poor Maud's brain whirled, her eyes grew dim as a hazy voice murmured:

"Blanche, justice shall be done," and then she listened a moment longer, while the rector commenced the solemn ritual, beginning with:

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered in the presence of God and His holy angels, to join this man and woman in holy wedlock. If any of you know any cause why they should not be joined together, let him now speak, or ever after hold his peace."

As he paused, involuntarily a low moan broke from Maud Ruthven, and echoed faintly through the chamber. Blanche started, murmuring:

"I thought I heard a voice!"

"Nay, nay; you are nervous after your illness," said the Earl of Lennox, and the priest went on, but Maud dared trust herself no longer; she was growing faint and giddy, and feared she might betray her secret to the enchantress, who had led him to break his vows.

Scarcely knowing what she did, she tottered through the corridors, emerged from the postern-gate and motioned to the boatman to row back to Richmond.

The cool sweep of the night wind revived her, and as the mists vanished, and the moon rose broad and fair, her companion watched her with compassionate interest.

"You are in trouble, lady," he said, at length, in a low, earnest tone, as she pushed back the hood from her sorrowful face.

"I cannot deny it, good boatman; I would give worlds if I were as happy as you watermen, who sing your gleeful boat-song, while gliding up and down the Thames."

The stranger mused a few moments ere he continued:

"You have not told me your name, lady, and yet I know you are a Ruthven—Hubert Ruthven's daughter, I ween?"

"Aye, you have spoken the truth."

"Your beautiful mother is dead, and your father gone, I understand, on an expedition with Sir Francis Drake to the New World?"

"Yes," responded the girl, astonished at his knowledge of her history.

"And you had a brother, where is he?"

"He was a soldier, and I well recollect how my heart bled when he went to the Indies. Some of the superstitious servants declared that I must have had a presentiment of his fate, for he never came back to us."

"And how long ago did he leave England?"

"Six years; for I was then a mere child, and I am now seventeen."

"Seventeen," echoed the boatman, "and the most beautiful young lady in all England, I'll be sworn; methinks your brother would be very, very proud of you were he still living."

There was a brief silence, and then the boatman continued:

"If it be not asking too much, I would like to hear more of your soldier brother."

"Well, good boatman, you seem to be strangely interested in all that concerns me and my family."

"There was a great battle, which proved disastrous to the English; our troops were obliged to retreat, and in their flight amid thick jungles and other perils that begirt them on every hand, they did not perceive my brother to be missing till they had proceeded several leagues. He was a great favourite among his brethren in arms, and his men were much attached to him, but nobody dared risk his own life to go in search of the missing, and when at length they were joined by a wanderer, who had hidden himself in the jungles by day, and pursued his journey after nightfall, he assured them the gallant officer had fallen on the field. Some traveller, at our request, endeavoured to find some farther trace of him, but to no purpose, and when year after year passed by, and he did not come back to us, we gave him up as dead."

"Lady," exclaimed the boatman, "would you rejoice to know that you had been misinformed, and he whom you mourn as dead had not found a soldier's grave in far-off India?"

"You mock me," cried Maud, tears gathering in her eyes as she recalled the past; "Philip's loss shrouded our home in mourning, and proved such a shock to my mother's delicate system, that all her old consumptive tendencies reappeared, and she died in less than a year after we had abandoned all hope of ever seeing him again."

The boatman appeared to be much moved by her recital, and at length faltered:

"Maud, Maud, do you not yet suspect the truth? Your brother is here at your side, and having learned since the vessel which bore him homewards dropped anchor, that you were under the guardianship of the queen, he practised a harmless ruse to bring about a meeting where he could speak with perfect unreserve. He rowed up the Thames in this boat, let the light craft shoot into a little cove near the royal landing-place, and traversed the distance intervening between that and the palace at Richmond. Hovering about the grounds, he finally saw you come forth, and stealthily followed you. As you recollect, when you expressed a wish to find a boatman, I offered my services, and you promised to give me a silver coin if I would row you to Whitehall. Dear, dear Maud, it required a strong effort to preserve any degree of self-control when I found myself alone with you, my sister, but I kept my secret till you had paid your visit to Whitehall Palace, and then gradually endeavoured to draw you into a confidential chat with a Thames boatman."

He had finished speaking Maud had sprung forward and knelt at his feet, with her face uplifted in earnest attention, and her eyes reading every feature of countenance, which, when he lifted his drooping hat, strongly reminded her of the brave knight who had gone with a band of fearless adventurers to the New World. The next moment she was folded to his heart in a convulsive embrace, and murmured brokenly:

"Oh, Philip, what a joyful day it would be to my father were he in England."

"Aye, Maud, but I trust he will live to return, and the remaining members of our household be reunited."

"To-night I have felt miserable and alone in the world," continued the girl, "and it is so sweet to find a brother who will care for me; but where have you been, during the weary years which have come and gone since that disastrous battle?"

"List, my sister; I was wounded on the field, and the last I heard was the victorious shouts of the enemy, and our colonel's order to retreat, and then a chaotic blank succeeded. When I awoke to consciousness, I found myself among the wild bush-men, who were bearing me away to a dismal stronghold, where I was kept a prisoner nearly three years. Then I was transferred to new quarters in a different part of the country, and treated with great kindness and respect by a native, whom I taught the rudiments of the English language, and the art of writing. Through his influence I was released, and when I took my leave, he loaded me with gold and pearls. I launched a rude boat, in which I rowed out to the vessel I had seen in the distance, which presently came bearing down towards me; the captain kindly took me on board, and I found it was bound for my native land. We have encountered adverse winds, and lay becalmed two days, but at last our voyage ended, and here I am, clasped in your arms. Thank heaven, thank heaven, that I once more tread the soil of home!"

"Dear, dear Philip; it appears like a pleasant dream," murmured his sister, while she pressed her lips to his and tenderly smoothed back the hair, curling around his massive forehead.

"Maud, my sister," continued Philip Ruthven, "you told me that you felt very wretched, and I read your sorrow in your face—what, what has happened to mar your peace?"

The girl nestled closer to him, and told when and where she had first felt an interest in the Earl of Lennox, her rescue from drowning in the waters through which they were then drifting, his assiduous attention to her, his visit to the Continent during the previous winter, his love-making, and their betrothal while she was sojourning with her royal protectress in his ancestral home.

Eloquently she described the appearance of Blanche L'Estrange at the court of Queen Bess, Cecil Hastings' recognition of the beautiful exile, his interest in her welfare, and his absence from Richmond one entire day without a word of explanation : she displayed the anonymous letter she had received, which he succeeded in reading by the clear moonlight, declaring that having resolved to have the evidence of her own senses confirm the grave charge against her lover, she had set out for Whitehall.

" And what did you see there, my sister ? "

" The affair has progressed farther than I thought ; and hark ye, Philip, as I concealed myself in the arms of the chamber occupied by the contessa, I perceived her leaning back in her chair, for she has been an invalid for several weeks, and I doubt not her illness has brought matters to a crisis sooner than the author of the warning believed."

" Did you see the Earl of Lennox in her presence ? "

" Yes, he stood near her with another gentleman, whose face I did not recognize, it was doubtless some friend who had been called in with the servants to witness the meeting. When the service commenced I could not repress a moan, which startled them for an instant, and besides, I grew so faint and giddy I dared trust myself no longer."

" Poor girl, his lordship shall answer to me for this conduct in a trial by combat."

" Nay, nay, leave him to his own conscience and the remorse which must follow, but take me away—that is all I ask ! Let me go where he can find no trace of my retreat."

" Be it as you wish, dear Maud ; I know your heart is heavy now, but you will learn to forget him and be happy."

Late that night the figure stole into the room occupied by Elizabeth of England, and scalding tears fell on the loosened hair which swept over the pillow—this was Maud Ruthven's parting with the queen to whom she had become so warmly attached.

The next morning at an early hour Cecil Hastings went to Richmond to tell Maud and his sovereign how he had succeeded, and communicate the fact that the interesting exile was now the bride of Sir Guy Montrose.

What was his surprise when he found Elizabeth pacing her chamber in a state of feverish excitement, her face pale and her eyes tearful.

As she perceived him, she clasped her hands and exclaimed :

" My Lord of Lennox, we cannot tell you what keen anxiety, what terrible suspense we are suffering—Maud is missing ! "

" Missing, your majesty ? " cried the earl, his whole frame trembling as he spoke.

" Yes, it is too true : this morning when we entered her room to inquire about the headache of which she had complained, we found her suite of chambers vacant, and we should have despatched a messenger to you at once had we not expected you would soon arrive. My lord, what do you think has befallen her ? "

" I fear she has fallen into the hands of Westmoreland or some of his emissaries, for he is a desperate man, and has sworn that she should never be mine."

The queen shuddered and continued :

" We have thought too of Signor Vellete, the musician, and the pages say they have of late seen him sauntering about the palace grounds."

" Heaven forbid ! " exclaimed Cecil Hastings ; " but be that as it may, I will give myself no rest till I obtain some clue to her fate."

" Hark ye, " resumed Elizabeth, " we know you will search for her with a lover's eagerness, and we will send our trusty servants, each in different directions, in pursuit of her, and issue a proclamation offering the sum of five thousand pounds to any person who will restore Lady Maud Ruthven, the queen's ward. Ah, my Lord of Lennox, we fear her father would think us recreant to the trust reposed in us should he return and find his treasure lost."

The royal proclamation was soon issued, and ere noon, the Earl of Lennox mounted his horse and went in search of the missing lady.

CHAPTER XI.

Time rolled on, and the expedition returned, bringing many rich prizes captured from the Spanish settlers in South America, and the waters where they had hitherto been masters of the sea.

Among those of his band, who had been spared during their long and perilous cruise, came Lord

Ruthven, who had won fresh laurels in this enterprise ; but when on his hastening to Whitehall, where the queen was then residing, he learned that her fate was shrouded in a painful mystery, his blood chilled and life lost its charm. Still, when the queen exclaimed :

" Oh, my lord, we fear you will reproach us for what you may deem carelessness," he replied :

" Royal madam, the blow falls heavily upon me, but I shall not upbraid you ; I have thrice received letters from her during my absence, and she has always spoken in the highest terms of your great kindness, your tender care."

The meeting was, however, painful in the extreme, but when he learned that the Earl of Lennox, after searching England had sailed for the Continent, declaring that he would never abandon the pursuit while life lasted, he could not give up all hope.

After the splendid banquet given to Elizabeth of England by Sir Francis Drake on board of one of the vessels which had sailed on the expedition, when a handsome proportion of the booty was profited the crown, Lord Ruthven took his way to his family seat.

Ruthven Hall was an old baronial structure, and had once formed a pleasant feature of the landscape, but now the hedges and shrubs grew in rank luxuriance, weeds had thrust out the flowers of the garden, and tall, rank grass waved on the lawn, which had once been covered with soft green grass.

" If Maud were living, " said the old knight, " I would improve the old homestead with the wealth I have gained as my share of the prize-money, but now, now I can never bear to stay here more."

With these words, he dismounted, and walked into the ancient hall, expecting to find only loneliness and desolation ; but what was his wonder and delight when he found the apartment pervaded by a soft lamp-light, and Philip and Maud sprang to meet him, murmuring :

" Do not despair ; you have two children instead of one, to welcome you."

We will not dwell on the scene that ensued, but in answer to his hasty inquiries, he heard the story which Philip Ruthven had told Maud that memorable night on the Thames, and the reason why his daughter had left the queen. Lord Ruthven listened with deep interest, and then said, gravely :

" Some enemy must have been plotting to estrange you from the Earl of Lennox, and this could not have been his own marriage, for you only heard the preliminary rites, and I feel certain you have in this instance been grossly misled. I have the word of the queen that the earl, after having searched England to find some trace of you, has sailed for the Continent, declaring he would dedicate his life to the pursuit of the lost Maud."

" Ah, say you so, my father ? " cried the girl, her cheek flushing and her eyes kindling with a light they had not worn since the clouds began to gather in their sky.

A long, confidential conversation ensued, and when the morning broke, the whole family set out for London. On reaching Whitehall, the meeting between the queen and her ward was a joyful one, while her brother was warmly welcomed.

Lord Ruthven now proceeded to explain the cause of his daughter's flight ; and calling Blanche, who was now a maid of honour, and the happy wife of Sir Guy Montrose, her royal protectress presented her with her new title, adding :

" My lady, you are the cause of our ward's flight, and we pray you explain your love matters so that we may be certain that the Earl of Lennox was not the principal actor, but only a witness to your marriage."

" Lady Montrose drew the girl aside, and when Maud produced the anonymous letter, she exclaimed :

" Some enemy has done this ; you and the earl are the victims of a base plot. Show it to the queen, and let her ferret out the author ! "

The next morning it was in Elizabeth's hands, and she muttered :

" Great heaven, we will investigate the matter, and know who has been vile enough to estrange two whom we hold in such favour."

While she was speaking, a page announced Sir Robert Woodford, formerly the court-jester, who had for a year been searching to ascertain the fate of Maud Ruthven. As her majesty showed him the letter, he gazed at it, and said :

" Royal madam, I fancy you will not have to look far to discover the author."

" Who, who can it be ? "

" Mayhap your majesty has not been aware that Lady Imogen Herbert has looked on your ward with jealous eyes, envying her beauty, her place in your court, and more than all, for having won the heart of the Earl of Lennox. She has of late, as I have learned from a page, whom she tried to bribe to her service, been the ally of Luigi Vellete, who is no other than the hated Westmoreland."

" Westmoreland ? Impossible ! "

" Nay, I speak the truth ; he is skilful in expedients, and when he found himself under ban, effectively separated from the lady of his love, he played a desperate game to gain the privilege of being in her presence. He always had a great taste for music, and while abroad he succeeded in becoming a proficient, and now he procured a mask painted with such a nice imitation of the human face as to deceive for a time the keenest-sighted of the court, and false hair and beard completed the disguise. He thought that his deep homage, and all the fascinations he brought into requisition, would succeed in winning her, and I fancy he would have borne her away had it not been for my strict watch and sudden appearance wherever he turned. I did not then know that he was Westmoreland, but I suspected some masquerade, and resolved to thwart his purposes. My knowledge of human nature told me that Lady Imogen was no friend to your ward, but I dared not expose her without positive proof."

At this juncture Alfred appeared, and said :

" Royal madam, the last day your ward was here the Earl of Lennox left a written message for Lady Maud, which Lady Imogen promised to deliver."

" I never, never received it, " cried the girl, and Sir Robert exclaimed :

" Will it please your majesty to call Lady Imogen ? "

" She is at home, too ill to be in attendance on our royal person, but some messenger can be despatched to her."

Lord Ruthven and his daughter set out for her father's residence, and to him the girl, upbraided by an accusing conscience, revealed the whole, bairing for forgiveness for her fault, and declaring that she would henceforth lead a different life, should heaven mercifully spare her. On returning to Whitehall, Maud could scarcely forgive herself for needing that anonymous letter, and when Sir Robert Woodford brought the returned wanderer from his hiding-place, she sank at his feet, and fervently begged his pardon for having distrusted his love.

" And where, where had you hidden yourself ? " asked the earl, " that we could find no trace of you ? "

" My brother took me to a remote Welsh glen, where my mother had dwelt in her girlhood, and we had once been on a visit."

" Come forth with me, " said the earl ; " I would fain see you alone after such a weary, weary separation." And he led her into the garden, and sinking at her feet with his eyes bent on her beautiful face, rehearsed the story of his wanderings, and began to lay plans for their immediate match. The next day he set off for Lennox Castle, but never reached it or returned to London till years had dragged by.

And Maud ? Though her heart sank at his protracted absence, she kept her faith in him, and believed he had fallen a victim to Westmoreland's revenge. Sir Robert Woodford and his old retainers sought for him with as much vigilance as they had for her, but in vain ; and at last they gave him up as irrevocably lost.

Meantime, Elizabeth Tudor's old enemy, Philip of Spain, was framing plans to avenge the signal defeat of his forces in Ireland and the aid and sympathy she had offered his revolted subjects. He had for some time been fitting out a great naval armament he had styled the Invincible Armada, with which he intended to overwhelm England. It consisted of more than one hundred ships of war, most of which were of remarkable size, mounting two thousand guns, and having on board thirty thousand soldiers and sailors, composed of volunteers of the most distinguished families. Elizabeth of England could muster but a small naval force to withstand this imposing array, but she was undismayed, for she had been called " The Queen of the Northern Seas," and she relied with confidence in the skill of her seamen and officers and the navy she had taken so much care to strengthen. The land forces, which were inferior in number and discipline to those of Philip, were posted wherever it was thought the Spaniards would land, and the vigour and prudence of the queen inspired the people with courage. Mounted on a superb steed, she appeared in the camp at Tilbury, while Leicester was in command, and riding along the lines, roused the enthusiasm of the soldiers by her animated language.

" Soldiers, " she said, firmly, " we know we have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but we have the heart of a king, and a king of England too, and we think it proud scions that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of our realms, to which, rather than dishonour shall grow by us, we will ourselves take up arms ! "

This harangue thrilled the men-at-arms scarcely less than those of Napoleon, the conqueror, when he said on the sands of distant Egypt :

" Soldiers, from yonder Pyramids forty centuries, look down upon you ! "

Every man felt as if he had an especial duty to perform, and once more shouts of—



[BLANCHE'S WEDDING]

"Death to the invaders—long live Queen Elizabeth," made the welkin ring. Leicester, who was in command, smiled at the enthusiasm of the troops, and assured the queen she had little to fear while such patriotic hearts beat in Britain.

At length the Armada sailed from Spain, and as it appeared off the "Lizard" was descried by a Scotch pirate, who was cruising in those seas, and he, hoisting every sail, hastened to give notice of the enemy's approach.

The information was well timed, for Effingham had just time to get out of port; if he had been obliged to remain there, his naval skill would have been useless, and his fleet destroyed by the superior force of the foe.

Ere long he perceived the Invincible Armada, coming under full sail towards him in the shape of a crescent, and stretching a distance of over seven miles, the banners of Spain floating in the breeze, and the whole scene forming a brilliant and imposing spectacle.

He soon discovered, however, that those stately foreign ships were ill built and unmanageable, and his principal fear was that those huge vessels might run upon, and by their weight sink his own.

But even their great size proved disadvantageous, for while the Spanish shot passed over the heads of the English, theirs did fearful execution.

Other vessels, pouring forth from every British port, joined Effingham, hovering upon the rear of the enemy and sinking such ships as were so unfortunate as to have been separated from the rest of the fleet.

Besides, vessels filled with combustibles were fired and sent drifting into the midst of the Armada, lighting up the sea with lurid splendour, and dispersing the fleet in wild alarm.

The enemy were thus nearly disabled, while the English had lost only one small vessel, and the Spanish admiral resolved to return home.

Heaven, however, seemed to frown on the expedition, and the winds being adverse, he was forced to sail to the north, to make the circuit of Scotland; but the English still pursued the retreating fleet, and had not their ammunition been exhausted, would doubtless have taken every vessel.

Fierce tempests lent their aid in the work of annihilation, and those who lived to return gave such accounts of English bravery, and the danger of the coast, as repressed every wish to attempt another invasion.

During the first engagement between the Invincible Armada and the English fleet, a commanding figure was observed to leap from the deck of a Spanish galleon, and cleave the waters, which rose and fell be-

tween him and the English flagship where Effingham stood, rapidly giving orders to his men.

The act was not perceived by the Spanish; but, though cannon-balls from both fleets kept flying around him, he gained the vessel, and was soon on deck.

"Lennox, Lennox!" cried one and another of the men, and a former acquaintance said:

"Have you risen from the dead?"

"From the dead of a Spanish dungeon," replied the earl. "I was on my way to my old castle, when I was seized by a band of ruffians, among whom I recognized Westmoreland, who attacked me and bore me blindfold to the 'keep' of his lonesome family seat, whence I was afterwards taken across the channel to Spain, where I was consigned to the tender mercies of Philip II. You have heard of the horrors of a Spanish dungeon; but I have been mercifully preserved through years of imprisonment, and at last a way has been opened for my escape. Six months ago, the king himself entered my cell and offered to release me on the condition that I would join the Invincible Armada, soon to sail for England, and give the admiral such information as lay in my power. He doubtless thought it would humiliate the pride of our queen to have an Englishman, who had held a high place at court, turn against her and his native land; and I accepted the offer, not to advance his purposes, but my own, and here I am ready to spill the last drop of blood in defence of my country."

He was now presented to Effingham, to whom he communicated facts which proved of great service, and ere the close of the engagement, had covered himself with glory.

It was on a glorious day when the British fleet again dropped anchor in the port whence they had sailed, and London wore a festal aspect. The bells sent forth their most jubilant peals, banners flaunted from tower and spire; joyous music echoed exultingly through the city, and bonfires were kindled on the surrounding heights.

As the procession passed Whitehall, Elizabeth of England appeared in a balcony, built expressly for that day's festivities, and gorgeous with purple and gold. Her imperial face wore its blondest smile, her cheek a rich crimson, and her eyes a triumphant light; and the head encircled by "the burning gold of the diadem," seemed more stately than of old.

She was surrounded by her maids of honour, and among them might be seen Maud Ruthven, as beautiful, but sadder than of yore, because of the sorrow which had fallen on her young life.

Suddenly she started, her lips quivered, and her eyes fastened on a man riding amid the returned

heroes. The next moment he flung a kiss towards the balcony, and lifting his hat, bent to his saddle-bow.

"Maud, Maud," cried the queen, "that is my Lord of Lennox; where, where can he have been all these long years?"

While she was thus speaking, he whispered to Effingham, and then dismounting, took his way into the palace. Maud sprang to meet him, and the tenderness with which he folded her to his heart told her that she was still dearer than all the world besides.

He then led her into the balcony, and told her of Philip's cruelty and temptation, and received a warm welcome to England; but it was not till the heroes gathered at a state dinner at Whitehall Palace that they learned of his exploits in the defeat of the Invincible Armada.

Three days later, another brilliant procession wound through the streets of London to Westminster Abbey, and amid the clash of jewels, the waving of plumes, and the rustle of costly garments, the archbishop solemnized the rites which bound Cecil Hastings to Maud Ruthven.

Lady Maud's bridal vestments, which the queen had insisted on furnishing, were fit for a royal bride; and the long flowing robe of white velvet, embroidered with seed pearls, the delicate lace ruff, the glittering stomacher, the ermine cloak, with its rose-coloured lining, the misty veil, and the family coronet spanning her brow—were worthy to have been the wedding gear of a princess.

Blanche L'Estrange was present at the wedding festivities, and the friendship which had existed between her and Maud since their discovery of Imogen Herbert's plot was maintained long afterwards.

Lady Imogen married a foreign nobleman; but when travellers returned from the Continent, where they occasionally met her, they declared she had thoroughly repented, and made a most excellent wife.

Westmoreland perished in the Spanish fleet, while fighting for his old ally Philip of Spain, and the boatman who had been his accomplice in the affair of the Thames was subjected to many years' imprisonment.

The queen and the nation delighted to honour the heroes who had done such signal service in the defeat of the Armada, and Elizabeth of England struck medals with the motto, *Affavit Deus et dissipavit*!

The wedded life of the Earl and Countess of Lennox was long and happy, and in the old gallery, lined with pictures of the brides and daughters of his house, there was no portrait half so beautiful as that of the Knight's Daughter.

C. F. G.



[THE SISTERS.]

THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXL

Such is the use and noble end of friendship,
To bear a part in every storm of fate,
And, by dividing, make the lighter weight.

Higgins.

Oh! who the exquisite delight can tell,
The joy which mutual confidence imparts?

Or who can paint the charm unspeakable
Which links in tender bonds two faithful hearts?

Mrs. Tighe.

AFTER long and anxious deliberation, the Lady Leopold decided to communicate her discovery of Natalie's paternity to Miss Wycherly before making it known to Natalie, and to be guided in her action, so far as should seem to her just and right, by the judgment and counsels of her aunt.

With this decision she waited until the day had closed, and the evening had merged into night. When, at last, all her guests had retired to their rooms, and the drawing-room lights had been extinguished, she proceeded to the eastern tower and knocked for admittance at the door of the ante-chamber.

She was obliged to repeat the summons again and again, each time more loudly, before a sound reached her ears from within.

At last, however, she heard the key rattle in the lock, and the door opened cautiously and only sufficiently to give Alison Murray a view of the visitor.

"Oh, it's your ladyship!" exclaimed the waiting-woman, in tones of relief, she having half-expected to behold Lord Waldemere, of whom she stood in great fear. "Will you come in?"

She stepped aside, giving ingress to the Lady Leopold, and then securely fastened the door, as the maiden said:

"Will you tell my aunt that I desire to see her, Alison?"

"My lady has retired—that is, she will soon see you," was the stammered response.

"If my aunt has retired, I will go to her bedroom! I do not wish her to rise on my account," and the maiden turned towards the inner chamber.

"Your ladyship must not go in there!" cried Alison, intercepting the course of Leopold. "My lady will not like it if you do. She allows no one in that room but me!"

Aware of her aunt's peculiar customs, Leopold acquiesced in the woman's decision, and signified her

willingness to wait her aunt's pleasure. She seated herself while Alison withdrew into the inner chamber, carefully locking the door behind her.

The light in the ante-room was soft and full, shining merrily through the glass globes, and the maiden amused herself by looking through a photographic album that lay upon the centre table, resigning herself to a long period of waiting.

She had not turned over a half-dozen pages when Miss Wycherly emerged from the inner room, in full evening dress, with the very flowers in her hair and upon her bosom that she had worn in the drawing-room an hour before.

Noticing that her costume had not been changed in a single point, the Lady Leopold exclaimed:

"Why, Aunt Alethea, Alison told me that you had retired!"

"Did she?" returned Miss Wycherly, carelessly, as if the statement were of no importance. "I suppose you have come in to see your new friend, Natalie? She will visit you in your own rooms if she comes to-night!"

"I came to see you, auntie!"

Miss Alethea bowed formally, saying:

"When you purpose doing me the honour of visiting my apartment, Leopold, I wish you would inform me beforehand. I am a great lover of seclusion, as you know, and your visits to me heretofore have been so infrequent that I am not always prepared for them!"

Leopold wondered that any preparation for her visits should be deemed necessary, and felt momentarily wounded at the coldness of her relative. She dismissed the feeling almost instantly, and replied, with affectionate gentleness:

"Since you desire it, Aunt Alethea, I will always forewarn you of my coming. I have a particular communication to make to you now which will, I hope, excuse my want of ceremony."

Miss Alethea took possession of an arm-chair, and awaited the promised communication. As Leopold hesitated as to the best manner to begin the unfolding of her secret, her aunt remarked:

"Your communication, I doubt not, relates to Basil or to Vane. Has Templecombe been addressing words of love to you?"

"He has, though not to-day. Last evening he declared that he loved me and asked me to become his wife!"

"The degenerate, false-hearted creature!" ejaculated Miss Alethea, with an indignant quivering of her tones. "How I have been deceived in him! Who would have believed that a Wycherly could be

so base? I hope, Leopold, that you possessed sufficient self-command to avoid betraying Natalie's secret?"

"Yes, auntie. I was very guarded in my replies to him, and scarcely gave him even the slightest ground for suspicion."

"I hope your refusal of him won't drive him from the Castle," observed Miss Wycherly. "So long as he remains here, I have hopes that Natalie may induce him to do justice to her. I have a singular interest in that unfortunate girl—perhaps because she bears such a strange resemblance to you! I cannot bear to think that her young life must remain so wrecked! Oh, how could Vane have been so cruel?"

The Lady Leopold thought the way opened for her communication, and said, hesitatingly:

"Aunt Alethea, was papa very much attached to my mother?"

"Very much indeed, child," answered Miss Wycherly, in tones of surprise. "Why should you ask such a question? Have you not often heard that his death was caused by excessive grief at her loss?"

"I have heard so, auntie; but are you quite sure of the truth of the story? Did he marry mamma for love?"

"Yes, my dear. The marriage was projected by the parents of the young couple; but I never beheld a fonder husband than was the late earl. His young wife was a queenly, radiant woman, or girl, for she was very young when she died, and he was very proud of her. Their married life was a dream of happiness, or, better, the realization of a dream. They lived at the Castle most of the time, satisfied with each other's society, and with the flowers, and books, and innocent amusements by which they surrounded themselves. I suppose," added the lady, with a sigh, "there was an Eden-like existence!"

"Do you suppose, auntie, that it is possible to love twice? Do you think that papa could have loved a second time as he loved mamma?"

"Certainly not!" responded Miss Wycherly, with a flush mounting to her cheeks. "Love comes but once to any heart. When he deserts his throne once, it is for ever! When the flush and glory of the first passion has completely died out, nothing can remain save ashes and desolation—nothing—nothing!"

There was a faint wail in her tones, as she uttered those last words, that sounded strangely in Leopold's ears—betokening, as it did, a capacity of suffering and a depth of anguish in Miss Alethea of which her nieces had deemed her incapable.

Perhaps the lady noted the look of surprise beaming

ing in Leopold's eyes, for she laughed discordantly, and resumed:

"I speak of women's hearts, my dear, not of men's. A man may love anew as often as the sun rises. I doubt not. Your papa had a woman's heart, and loved devotedly and steadfastly as women love!"

"I fear not, Aunt Althea," remarked the maiden, sadly. "I cannot, if I would, blame papa for being easily consoled for my mother's death; but it is very hard to think that his second love was the cause of bitter suffering—"

"What can you mean? How could he have been 'easily consoled' for a loss that was irreparable?"

"I have been looking over papa's papers to-day," answered Leopold, with unsteady tones, "and came upon packages of letters and a picture, neither of which had been my mother's!"

"They might have belonged to a boyish fancy, Leo!"

"No, Aunt Althea, they bore a date subsequent to mamma's death! They were tender, loving letters, such as might have passed between wife and husband, and I was touched to see how devotedly that young girl had loved him!"

"This seems incredible! What was the girl's name?"

"Amy."

"I never heard that he had any affection for a girl of that name!"

"She was of a birth inferior to papa's, auntie. Soon after mamma's death he was travelling about, visiting a friend, I believe, and met this young girl at a country ball. She was the queen of the festivity, admired and courted by those of her own rank, and noticed and caressed by those above her. Her gaiety and innocence charmed papa into forgetfulness of his grief, and he sought her acquaintance privately, meaning to love her as he had loved before!"

"You gathered this from the letters you read to-day?"

"Yes, auntie. This Amy was a lovely little elf, to judge by her portrait, and I cannot blame papa for having loved her. But I do blame him for his subsequent acts. He stole her from the home of which she was the idol, and carried her away, without betraying his hand in the matter to any, save the girl herself. He installed her in a little home of her own, had her instructed in the various accomplishments, pretending that some day she would be recognized as his countess!"

"Leopold, this story surpasses belief!"

"It is true, Aunt Althea. After a time, they had a child born to them, and papa loved it, but not quite so much as he did me. Though he had forgotten mamma for this young girl, mamma's child was dearer to him than was hers. He used to leave Amy at times to visit the Castle or his friends, and during these absences they exchanged letters regularly. In some of these, she begged him to acknowledge her for their child's sake. In one of these visits to the Castle he died suddenly, as we know. On learning the sad event, Amy took her child and went home broken-hearted! She did not long survive papa, but her name and memory were disgraced in the eyes of the world!"

"Of course—of course!" said Miss Wycherly. "What else could she have expected? But if she was so young and innocent, Leopold was chiefly to blame. I can hardly believe it of him. He was always the soul of honour. He would not have harmed a worm. How could he have lost his integrity and deliberately brought suffering and shame upon an innocent household?"

Miss Althea arose and crossed the floor several times, hurriedly, concealing her agitation under her impetuous movements.

"He was very dear to me," she mused, forgetful of her niece's presence. "I was but a child at his death, and I revered him as if he had been a demi-god! Oh, Leopold, Leopold!"

"Perhaps, auntie," suggested the maiden, "he might have married this young girl?"

"Impossible! What did you say was her rank?"

"She was a yeoman's daughter!"

"And my brother was an earl! One of an ancient line, which had never disgraced itself by a *mesalliance*! He was very proud too, Leopold. Your mother was a duke's daughter. I am sure that he would not have given you a step-mother of a servant's rank!"

"But she was beautiful and intelligent, auntie!"

"So much the worse for her—poor simple dove! Had she been ugly and silly, she might have been living to-day!"

Miss Wycherly resumed her walk, communing with her thoughts.

She had spoken of her brother as proud, and so he had been. Pride was an especial characteristic of the Wycherly family, and in none had that element been more powerful than in Miss Althea herself. It had made her habitually haughty and unbending to every

one, and by its exercise she had concealed many a feeling of anguish under a cold and careless smile.

Her pride was sorely tried now.

While giving partial credence to the Lady Leopold's assertions, Miss Wycherly felt that she could not have it so—that there must be some mistake! The brother whose memory she had cherished and venerated, whose public career had been as bright as evanescent, could not have been the heartless libertine his letters declared him.

"What do you suppose has become of his child, Leopold?" she said, at length, abruptly. "Was it a boy?"

"Can't you guess, Aunt Althea? It was a girl, and you have seen her."

"You speak in riddles!"

"The daughter of the Earl of Templecombe and Amy is Natalie Afton! Oh, auntie, have you not seen that she is even more like papa than I am?"

"Is it possible?" ejaculated Miss Wycherly, sinking upon a seat, as a conviction of the truth entered her mind. "Yes, it must be! Shadæs the family look, far more than I have. She is my brother's daughter!"

"And your niece, and my sister?"

"What do you intend to do about it, Leopold?"

"I intend to make known the relationship to Natalie, and be her best and truest friend! It is not necessary to betray the secret to anyone else, for I would not have a shadow of blame thrown upon papa's name. I try not to judge him, but others might not have the pity and affection his daughter bears his memory. Do you blame me, auntie, for loving my sister? She is papa's younger child, and he loved her and her mother!"

Miss Wycherly was a long time silent, but not insensible to the timid pleadings of her niece.

What conflicts took place in her soul she never made known, but she finally approached her niece, pressed her lips to her brow, and said, with more warmth in her tones than was usual to them:

"My dear Leopold, you are good and true. The honour that I had supposed your father to possess is really a part of your being. I cannot forgive my brother for his cruelty to that poor young girl—not even although he has been sleeping for years in his tomb. But his daughter must not suffer, if we can help her. We will be her friends, Leopold, and make amends for the sorrows and shame she has already endured!"

"And we will endeavour to induce Vane to acknowledge her as his wife, auntie!"

"Yes, Leopold. I cannot talk farther with you now, however; nor can I see Natalie to-night. Tell her that I feel tenderly towards her, and pity her sincerely!"

Again drooping her stately head, Miss Wycherly bestowed another caress upon her niece, and then, turning, swept across the apartment, disappearing within the inner chamber.

Thus left to herself, Leopold sought the silken lounge, gathered a pile of soft cushions under her head, and gave herself up to thought.

Her reflections soon became confused and indistinct, and she sank into a doze, from which she was partially aroused by the opening and shutting of a door and the trail of soft garments over the carpet.

Then someone came and stood a moment beside her, then knelt beside the couch and covered her hand with kisses, while uttering broken words of gratitude and affection.

Opening her eyes, Leopold beheld Natalie.

The face of the deserted young wife was pale, and there was a look of patient weariness upon it that even her grateful and loving expression could not banish.

"I have been waiting for you, Natalie," said the Lady Leopold, kindly. "I believe I had nearly fallen asleep when you entered. Are you well to-night?"

"As well as I can be with this weight upon my heart, dear Leopold!" answered Natalie, with passionate earnestness.

"The weight of which you speak, Natalie, is made heavier by the mystery of your paternity, is it not?"

The young wife replied in the affirmative.

"Come with me, dear Natalie," said the Lady Leopold, arising. "I have a communication to make to you!"

Lighting a hand-lamp that stood upon the centre table, the maiden led the way from the tower, followed by the wondering Natalie.

They passed along corridors and passages, ascending stairs, until finally they stood upon the threshold of the deserted rooms in the top of the western tower. Here they paused to unlock the door, and the Lady Leopold ushered Natalie into the chamber in silence.

When she had followed her and locked the door behind them, the maiden said:

"Natalie, this suite of rooms belonged to my father,

the late Earl of Templecombe. They are just as he left them, not an article of furniture having been removed since his death. No hand but mine has even touched his papers and pictures and the things he loved!"

"They are pleasant rooms, lady," said Natalie, looking about her with natural curiosity.

Leopold conducted her to the inner chamber, deposited the lamp upon a table, and remarked:

"This was his lordship's favourite room, Natalie. These were the books he loved to study; many of the drawings in that portfolio were executed by his hand; and the telescope at which you are looking was used by him to study the stars. He used to spend hours at a time here, and, during his lifetime, my mother delighted to share his retreat."

"I do not wonder at it," murmured Natalie.

"This *secretaire* contains his private papers and correspondence," said Leopold, approaching it. "I looked them over to-day and made a discovery."

Opening the desk, she withdrew the ivory portrait of Amy Afton and silently placed it in Natalie's hands.

The young wife regarded it intently, apparently fascinated by the ethereal beauty it portrayed, and exclaimed:

"How very lovely! Who is she, Leopold?"

"That is the picture of one who has been dead many years."

"Was she your mother, lady?" asked Natalie, in awe-struck tones.

"Not my mother, dear Natalie—but yours. That is the picture of Amy Afton."

The solemn, impressive tone of Leopold carried conviction of the truth to Natalie's heart, and she devoured the picture with her gaze, murmuring:

"My mother. That pretty young girl my mother. No wonder everybody loved her. No wonder grandmother seemed turned to stone by the disgrace of that beautiful creature."

She pressed it passionately to her lips, as Leopold said:

"You do not ask me, Natalie, how that picture came into my father's possession."

"I have not thought to ask. Perhaps my mother was wedded secretly to one of his servants."

The Lady Leopold twined one arm about Natalie's slender waist, and conducted her to a large mirror set in the wall as a panel. The light was placed in the best position, revealing the reflections of their persons to the utmost advantage.

"Natalie," said the maiden, with all a sister's tenderness, "notice again our close resemblance. It is no miracle, as we have thought, but nature's sign of kinship. Natalie," and the Lady Leopold trembled slightly and folded the girl closer, "our father was the same."

Natalie started in astonishment and bewilderment, unable to comprehend the revelation to which she had listened.

"Your father was an earl, Leopold," she faltered.

"Yes, dear," responded the maiden, leading her to the earl's portrait. "They say that this is a perfect representation of him. Do you not see how very like you are to him?"

"I do."

"Is it then so difficult to comprehend the truth? He was your father as well as mine, dear sister."

The Lady Leopold, as she spoke, drew Natalie's fair head to her bosom and kissed her. The caress was returned, with a burst of weeping, as the deserted young wife realized the truth, and she exclaimed:

"You are then my sister, dear Leopold! Heaven has vouchsafed me one joy at last! My darling, darling sister."

All thought of disparity in their respective stations was blotted out from the minds of the fair sisters as they mingled their tears, clasped tightly in each other's arms.

The Lady Leopold lost the slight hauteur that usually distinguished her manner, and Natalie forgot her air of shyness and timidity, in the rush of tender feeling with which they acknowledged their relationship.

At length Natalie lifted her head with a sudden thought, a deep flush staining her cheeks, and said:

"Our father was an earl, Leopold, and your mother was of high rank, while mine was of humble station. You are proud and honoured, while I am nameless. How could he have had the heart to destroy an innocent young girl, such as my mother was? I hate his memory," and she gave a bitter, defiant look at the smiling portrait.

"Hush, Natalie," said the older sister, softly. "Remember that your mother loved him—that he was your father. He loved you very dearly, and you must not hate him. It is not for you to judge him, sister. He has gone to a higher judge, and whatever he did of wrong and cruelty must be buried for ever in the hearts of his daughters."

Drawing the soothed Natalie to the same position

she knelt before the picture, bowing her head in an attitude of prayer.

For some minutes the sisters knelt thus, and when they arose Natalie's bitterness and anger had disappeared, and Leopold's brow was crowned with a look of holiness, as if in her communion with the better world she had caught something of its glorious radiance.

"Natalie, my darling sister," said the maiden, "we have left behind us all reflections against our father, have we not?"

Natalie assented.

"He was good and honourable in all things else. Perhaps, if he had lived—but we won't discuss possibilities. This picture of your mother belongs to you. You have a right, too, to the letters that passed between your parents, and I will give them to you now. Read them carefully, dear sister, and find in them some justification of papa's conduct. You will learn that he loved and cherished Amy as he had done my mother!"

Searching the desk, the Lady Leopold gathered together several packets of letters, which she gave to Natalie.

"I will take one packet at a time, Leopold. If I visit you nightly, I can get them as often as I wish. I do not like to carry them all about with me, and they are too precious to leave behind me at the cottage."

Natalie put her mother's picture in her bosom, concealed a packet of the letters in her pocket, and turned to take another look at the pictured semblance of her father.

"Natalie," said the Lady Leopold, "I want you to remember that I am your elder sister, and that I love you as well as though we had had the same mother. Come to me with all your griefs and you shall receive a sister's sympathy and counsel. It shall be my privilege to aid and comfort you and to advise you, I will exert every effort to gain your recognition by Vane. In the event of my failure, I shall bring you to live with me, as my honoured and cherished sister. In the event of my success, you will take your station as the Countess of Templecombe. I have always longed for a sister," she added, "and now that my desire has been so unexpectedly gratified, I am not going to lose sight of you even for a day. If I cannot own our relationship to the world, the secret tie that links us to each other will be all the sweeter and stronger!"

Natalie assented with passionate fervour, her heart swelling with the holiest joy under the tender affection of her nobler-born sister.

The Lady Leopold spent a little time in gentle and skilful endeavours to kindle a filial love in Natalie's heart for her late father, showing her his favourite books and musical instruments, a scrap of yellow paper, upon which, in faded ink, was inscribed a little poem to "Amy," and various other relics, calculated to interest his unacknowledged daughter.

At length she invited Natalie to accompany her to her rooms, and taking up the lamp they had brought the sisters quitted the desolate chambers, securing the door behind them, and noiselessly flitted through the corridors, gaining, unobserved, the bright and fragrant apartments of the Lady Leopold.

CHAPTER XXII.

The miserable hath no other medicine,
But only hope. *Shakespeare.*

A cause on foot

Lives so on hope, as in an early spring
We see the appearing buds, which, to prove fruit,
Hope gives not so much warrant as despair.
That frosts will bite them. *Ibid.*

NATALIE lingered hours in the apartments of the Lady Leopold, laying bare the secret of her innocent heart to the newly found sister, and receiving in return the most delicate and affectionate sympathy. Their newly discovered relationship assumed the greatest importance in the eyes of both, and neither bestowed a thought upon the inferior fortunes of the younger or the superior birth of the elder.

Like most young maidens reared among older people, each had longed for a sister to share her hopes and fears, her joys and sorrows, and neither was now disposed to question the providence that had so unexpectedly bestowed upon them the wished-for boon.

There was a feeling of bitterness in the heart of Natalie towards the father, whose name she had just learned; which Leopold could not eradicate, although by her gentle efforts she greatly lessened it.

The unacknowledged daughter could not forget the blighted youth of her poor young mother, the harshness that had been meted out to her by grim Mrs. Afton, and the disappointed Aleck, hurrying her to her nameless grave; nor could she forget her own isolated and desolate existence, upon which the sun of affection had never shed a single ray until he came to wither and destroy.

And all these wrongs she attributed to her father.

The Lady Leopold soon ceased to combat this feeling on the part of Natalie—at least, openly—but she did not cease to dwell upon the known good qualities of the late earl, and urge that condemnation of his errors should come from others than his daughter.

Comforted at last, and far happier than she had been since quitting Afton Grange, Natalie at length bade the Lady Leopold a tender good-night, promising to return the next evening, and took her departure.

She made her way to the eastern tower, and was admitted to Miss Wycherly's apartments by Alison Murray, who seemed to have been just aroused from her sleep.

The waiting-woman declared her lady to be slumbering, and Natalie, therefore, quickened her steps, making, as soon as possible, her egress from the Castle.

Gaining the lawn, the young girl looked back at the stately edifice, with its massive flanking towers, noting the lights that gleamed through its mulioned windows. There was one, seeming to her like a star of hope, beaming brightly from the room of the Lady Leopold; another glowed as if stealthily, it was so dim, in the apartment of Lord Templecombe; and a third light struggled faintly through the interstices of the ivy screen that covered the upper windows of the eastern tower.

Even while Natalie regarded the last, a cautious hand replaced the curtains and blinds that had been slightly displaced, and the eastern tower was veiled in unbroken gloom.

Returning her glances to Lord Templecombe's room, Natalie murmured:

"It is well, perhaps, that I did not visit him to-night. He seems prepared for my coming. My visits will have more effect upon him when they come unawares."

With a thoughtful step, she turned towards the fountain-glede, not noticing in her abstraction the figure that flitted before her in the shadow of the trees, and that, finally, on becoming convinced of the course her steps were taking, deposited itself upon the bench within the circular glade.

A moment later, Natalie saw him and recognized him as her recreant husband.

"Elmer!" she ejaculated.

"It is I, Natalie!" exclaimed the earl, arising and approaching her, his tones apparently full of emotion. "I have been waiting for you a long time. I have something particular to say to you!"

"Speak on, then!" said the young wife, haughtily.

"First you must come and sit beside me on this bench," and the earl took her hand to lead her thither.

Natalie drew her hand quickly from her grasp, replying:

"Say what you wish here!"

"I cannot. I want to look into your eyes while I tell you what I have to say. Do you love me then no longer, Natalie?"

"A reproach scarcely appropriate to your lips, my lord!" observed his young wife, sarcastically. "But if you cannot make your purposed communication without looking into my eyes, I will accede to your wishes!"

Refusing his proffered arm, she walked on to the bench, Lord Templecombe following her with a flushed face and biting his lip savagely.

He seated himself beside her, but she quietly retreated to the farther extremity of the seat, saying:

"Be kind enough to keep your distance, Lord Templecombe!"

"What do you mean, Natalie?" demanded his lordship, angrily, piqued at her cavalier treatment of him.

"Why do you avoid me, and treat me so coldly?"

"Because, in justice to myself, I cannot do otherwise," was the cold rejoinder. "Since you disclaim our relationship, you will be kind enough to treat me with the respect due a stranger."

"But, Natalie," said his lordship, moving nearer, and stealing an arm about her waist, "you cannot so have steeled your heart against me."

For answer, the deserted bride flung off his encircling arm, and flashed at him a look of proud defiance.

"Do not touch me," she commanded. "Do not speak words of love to me. I will not be insulted even by you."

The earl was not only astonished, but more than ever piqued, by this outburst of indignation, and caressed his moustache while deliberating what to say next.

He had waited hours about the lawn that night for Natalie's coming, and had, during their lapse, developed a plan for ridding himself of her importunities that seemed to him infallible. To carry it out, the exercise of hypocrisy was necessary, but the earl was not lacking in deceitfulness, and had no fears that he should fail in that respect.

"Now look here, my dear girl," he said, after a

pause, in the drawing tone peculiar to him. "Don't be so hard upon me. I've been a bad fellow, a monster, if you like, but you took me for better or worse, you know. I've treated you shabbily, I'm aware, but I'm not so bad as I might be. At any rate, you ought to remember that I'm your husband."

"You acknowledge our marriage then?" cried the wife, eagerly.

"I do. I've had my temptations to repudiate you, Natalie; I don't deny it, but I could give you good reasons for my late actions, so that you would pity more than condemn me."

Natalie drew a little nearer his lordship, the flush coming and going on her cheeks, making her so lovely that the earl began to feel the old glamour of her beauty again embracing his senses.

"One of your reasons, I suppose," said the young girl, "was that you had tired of me. Another was, that you had fallen in love with your beautiful cousin, the Lady Leopold Wycherly."

"You are only partly right, Natalie," answered the earl, with an assumption of frankness. "I will lay bare my whole soul to you. I never tired of you, but after my return to town and mingling again with the world, you became to me more of a cherished memory than a living reality. This became especially the case after I renewed my acquaintance with the Lady Leopold. It was her first season out, and everybody admired and loved her—I among the rest. You see I am telling you the whole truth. I thought I had thrown myself away upon a nameless girl, and that I could repudiate my marriage with her."

"Well?"

"I proposed to my cousin the other day, and was rejected. She loves another. Her scorn has restored to me my senses, Natalie, and my heart has returned to its allegiance. Will you take me back, Natalie? Have you room in your heart for the husband who has so wronged and grieved you?"

He asked the question as if his very existence depended upon her reply.

But had the young wife been less agitated, she might have observed a gleam of satisfaction in his pale-coloured eyes, and the faintest smile about his lips that betokened extreme self-admiration.

"Are you mocking me, Elmer?" she demanded, tremblingly, not daring to believe him in earnest.

"Mocking you, Natalie, my little wife? How can you ask the question? Believe me sincere, although I have hitherto treated you so cruelly!"

"I do not know what to think!" exclaimed Natalie, pressing her hand against her brows. "Do you not now love the Lady Leopold?"

"No. I regard her as a relative and friend—nothing more. I was like a moth fluttering about a lamp, and my passion for her made me write that cruel letter to you. If she had accepted me, I would have married her. Her refusal disenchanted me; and my heart turned back to the patient, gentle little wife, whose life I had so blighted, and whose love for me was so pure and steadfast, Natalie, I can offer no apology to you for having thrust you aside, and offered your place to another, for apologies will be of no avail, since they cannot obliterate my folly and wickedness. But will you pardon me?"

"Not yet," answered the young wife, briefly. "My forgiveness must not be lightly bestowed, for when given it will be fail and from my very heart. Tell me, Elmer, did you love me when we were married?"

The earl replied in the affirmative.

"Did you at that time intend to cast me off when you should tire of me?"

"No, Natalie, I did not!" was the unblushingly false rejoinder.

"You truly loved me, then!" cried Natalie, joyfully. "Thank heaven! But when did you begin to think of casting me off?"

"When I again met the Lady Leopold," replied his lordship, a little impatient at the protracted explanation and his tardy restoration to his young wife's favour. "I had then discovered your entire history, and I felt it impossible to own you as my bride and countess!"

"And now?"

"I am ready to give you the recognition you demand!"

Natalie could scarcely credit the evidence of her senses, and made the earl repeat his declaration.

And then everything seemed to reel around her, her great joy almost depriving her of consciousness. Her breathing came quickly through her parted lips, and her blue eyes looked through a mist upon the glade and the fountain and the bending trees.

The earl comprehended the crisis, and snelt beside her, looking up into her fair and lovely face with the adoring look she remembered so well, while his lips pleaded for pardon.

If Natalie had but known how utterly false he was.

Yet not utterly false, for the fancy he had once cherished for her had renewed its being under the ro-

mantic influence of the scene and her loveliness. But it did not cause him to falter in the course he had undertaken, nor to relent in the designs he had formed. He had no intention of keeping the word he was giving, and he had never spoken more falsely than when declaring an intention of acknowledging her to the world as his wife.

But his young bride, unhappily, could not read his heart.

Guileless and truthful herself, generous as the sun, she believed him.

The old romantic love which she had fancied dead stirred itself among the ashes, and glowed and flamed new—*a* flickering flame that tenderness and affection would fan into an undying passion.

The memory of those happy days at the cottage, when her young husband had bent to her every caprice and had found his chiefest joys in studying her innocent heart, returned to her now, softening her towards him, and healing the wounds he had given her.

The old love light leaped up into her blue eyes, the old tender smile fluttered shyly about her crimsoning lips, and, with a sudden impulse, she leaned forward, giving and sealing her forgiveness with a wifely kiss.

"Do not kneel to me, Elmer," she said, dwelling tenderly upon the name under which he had wedded her. "You have deeply erred, but if you still love me, all that is unhappy in our past shall be forgotten. I will never reproach you because you would have married another during my life-time, nor will I remember against you that cruel letter. I do not blame you for having loved the brilliant Lady Leopoldine, since her rejection of you has caused you to love me the more!"

The earl arose at her bidding, not caring to retain longer his attitude of humility, and seated himself at Natalie's side, encircling her slender waist with his arm.

She did not now throw off his clasp, or draw herself haughtily away. Hopeful and happy, she nestled confidingly to his breast, pillowng her head against his false heart, not dreaming that even then it was nurturing schemes against her.

"Oh, Elmer," she whispered looking beyond his bending face to the glorious, star-lighted sky. "I cannot realize that I am the same girl as she who wandered so despairingly here only last night. How happy I am! Will you always be true to me now, my husband?"

"Always!" was the reply. "Never again harbour a doubt of my fidelity, Natalie, for the sun will not be truer to its course than my heart to you!"

"My happiness is almost painful! I had not hoped for so much joy again in this world! I might have lost all this happiness, Elmer, but for providential interposition. After our other meeting in this glade, I was tempted to destroy myself!"

The earl caressed her, mentally wishing that she had done so, and consequently spared him his present annoyance.

Her trusting look dispelled the momentary feeling, and he felt himself again her lover—her calculating and cautious lover.

"Shall you take me to the Castle to-morrow and introduce me to your relatives as your bride, Vane?" whispered the young wife timidly, after a pause.

"Would that I dared to do so, Natalie. I fear they would not be willing to receive you as the Countess of Templecombe. The pride of caste is strong with them, my little wife."

It trembled upon Natalie's tongue to tell her husband of her acquaintance with Miss Wycherly and the Lady Leopoldine, and of her relationship to the latter, but a wise impulse restrained the communication. She resolved to surprise him with it at some future period.

"You have good sense, Natalie," observed his lordship, "and will readily understand what I am about to say to you. Your family is infinitely beneath mine, and, while I should be proud of you, I would not wish to own your grandmother and uncle as relatives."

"I understand you. Yet grandmother is a lady, Elmer, even if she is not a gentlewoman by rank. Think how long the Grange has been owned by the Aftons. Why, the gentlefolks used to think a great deal of grandmother."

"I don't doubt it. She's well enough in her way, but she's more suited to a farmhouse than a castle. Besides," added the earl, bethinking him of a more potent argument, "I can never be friendly with anyone who has caused my darling a single pang of sorrow."

Natalie smiled joyfully at this affectionate assurance, and replied:

"Of course, Elmer—Vane, I mean—would not wish you to keep friendly with grandmother and Uncle Aleck. There is too great a difference in your respective ranks. I do not care for them, only I would like them to know that I am really married."

"And a countess. They shall know it, Natalie. So they are disposed of. Now in regard to the announcement of our marriage. I am very proud, as you know. Half my faults are caused by pride. I want others to admire you as I do, and I do not wish even one of the critics of the fashionable world to find a flaw in the jewel I have won. In short, Natalie, before I introduce you to my friends, I want you to become versed in accomplishments, to be able to converse upon the light literature of the day, and to get rid of your shyness and timidity, which are so charming to me, replacing them by an ease of manner, such as is always exhibited by the Lady Leopoldine. Your charming shyness would pass with society for awkwardness. Do you love me enough to make this sacrifice to my wishes, little wife?"

"When you call me by that name, and speak to me in those tones, Elmer, I could do anything to please you!" said Natalie, yet with a sigh. "I know I am uncultured, and that I would appear to disadvantage beside fashionable ladies. Perhaps you are right. Would you wish me to attend school?"

"What, allow my wife to be subject to a schoolmistress! No, indeed, Natalie. If you will have confidence in me, I will take you to a country seat of mine, install you there with an old house-keeper, and send down to you some of the best instructors I can find. Then when you have perfected yourself in the desired branches, I will come for you!"

"I shall be very lonely though!"

"Not so, Natalie. I shall pay you frequent visits. And as soon as your progress will warrant me in doing so, I will confide the secret of our marriage to the Lady Leopoldine, and induce her to accompany me to your retreat. You shall write to me often, and I will promise to be a very prompt correspondent!"

Still Natalie hesitated.

Perhaps a realization of how fully she would be placing herself in the earl's power, by going to that secluded country house, entered her mind, but she did not allow herself to fear or distrust him.

She thought his objections very natural, and yielded to them with good grace, saying:

"I am your wife, Elmer, and will do as you judge best. If you send me to your country seat, I will go cheerfully, as a wife should go, and will apply myself to the accomplishments you recommend. When will you take me there?"

"To-morrow—that is, to-day, for it is already early morning. I will excuse myself to Miss Wycherly, on the plea of business, take you to The Fens, and then return to the Castle. You will be at the village station, veiled, in time for the morning train. Purchase a first-class ticket, and obtain an entire compartment if you can do so without attracting attention. Do not seem to be expecting anyone, for I am known to the officials about the station, and I would not have them notice that you and I were in company."

The young wife assented, and his lordship asked:

"Where are you staying now, Natalie? Not in the village, I hope?"

"I have found lodgings at a farm-house," replied Natalie, evasively, not wishing to betray her connection with Miss Wycherly. "The farmer's wife does not know my story!"

"Very good!" and the earl breathed more freely. "You have showed great discretion, Natalie, and merit my approbation. Do not tell these farming people where you are going, or who is to accompany you. Pay them well for their services to you, but do not have any formal leave-takings with them. Here is money."

He handed her his purse, but the young wife declined it, declaring that she was well provided with funds.

After a further discussion of plans, Natalie declared she must return to her lodgings, and the earl, with a great show of affection, accompanied her through the park to the very edge of the wood beyond it, enjoining her again and again not to forget her promise to be at the station in time for the morning train.

He parted from her with apparent reluctance, and Natalie sped along the road with light steps and a light heart, wondering at the joys that had crowded into that single night.

The earl retraced his steps towards the Castle, musing delightedly upon Natalie's innocent furthering of his schemes, and muttering:

"The girl is pretty enough. After all, what need is there to cast her off entirely? Perhaps I can induce her innocent soul so that she will be contented to leave me free in the eyes of the world. When I tire of her again, I can devise a good plan to get rid of her. I shall yet wed the Lady Leopoldine!"

With this resolve, he returned to his chamber to catch a few hours' sleep before dawn.

At the breakfast-table he pretended to have received a sudden summons to town which he could not avoid acting upon, and promised to return to the Castle in a day or two.

Sir Wilton Werner accompanied him to the village

station at the proper time, and endeavoured to catch a glimpse of Natalie's face, the young wife being punctual to her appointment, but in this he was defeated.

"You will find a housekeeper, I believe, at the Fens, Templecombe," whispered the baron as they walked the platform, while awaiting the train. "If not she lives in a cottage near at hand. I wish you good luck with your veiled beauty. There comes the train!"

The locomotive glided into the station at this juncture, drawing after it the serpentine train, and Natalie secured an unoccupied compartment, into which she was followed by Lord Templecombe.

The next minute they were hastening rapidly from the station, and from the friends who would have guarded Natalie from the ills and dangers into which she was so unknowingly plunging.

(To be continued.)

MR. GUINNESS who so magnificently restored St. Patrick's Cathedral, in Dublin, is now expending a considerable sum in renovating the ancient abbey of Cong, which stands on his estate on the borders of Galway and Mayo. As it presents some of the finest specimens of Gothic windows and doorways in the country, the restoration of the old abbey is looked on with especial interest by both architects and antiquaries. It is the burial-place of many of the ancient Irish kings.

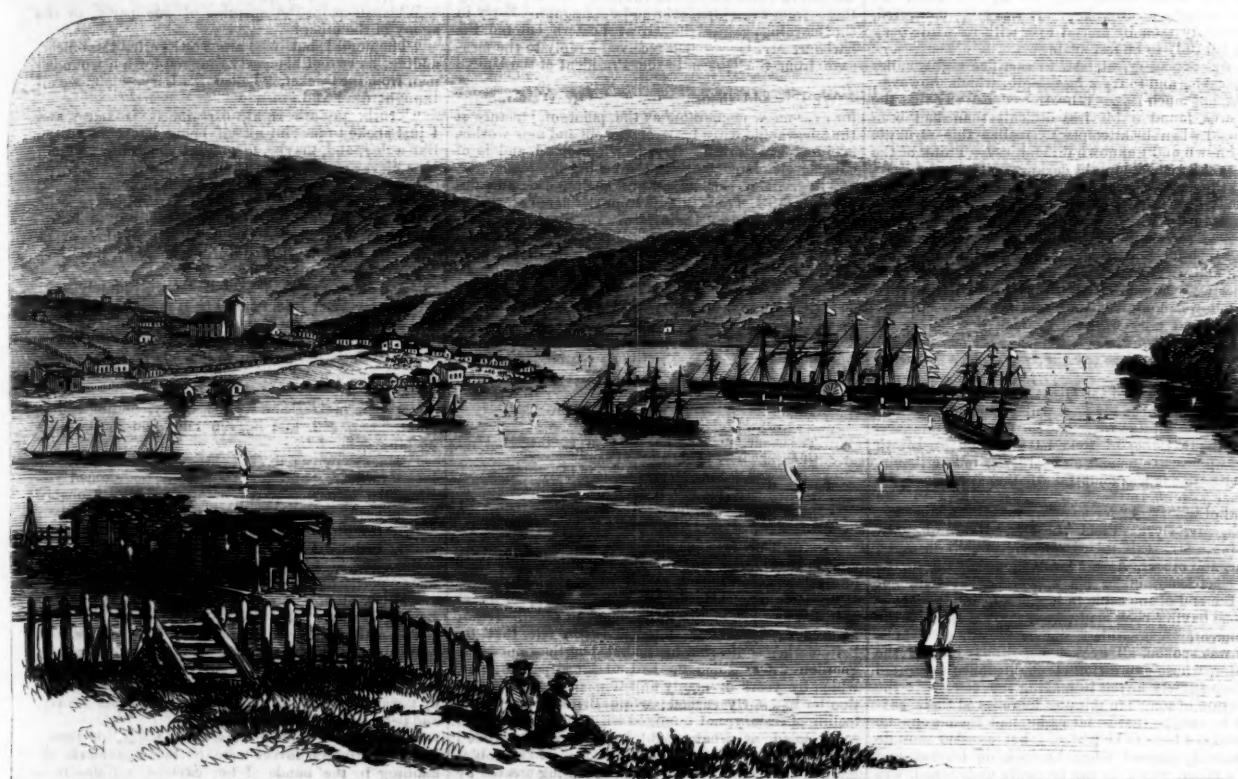
DRINK AND MADNESS.—Dr. Joly has lately made a report to the Academy of Medicine of Paris, in which he deprecates the increased tendency to the consumption of alcohol by the French nation. A hundred years ago France only consumed 200,000 hectolitres of alcohol yearly—she now consumes 4,000,000. Dr. Joly declares that an increased tendency towards mental disease has been generated by the increasing consumption of spirits; and an official report lately published seems to corroborate his views, the abuse of alcohol accounting for one-fifth of the insanity in France.

A ROMAN GRIDIRON.—One of the most curious objects recently discovered in the excavations in France is what we may venture to call a Roman gridiron. It is engraved and described in a recent work by M. Maximilian de Ring, who has made extensive researches in the early cemeteries and burial-places in Alsace. This instrument is extremely well made of iron coated with bronze, with a raised open guard on one side for the meat, and a groove to catch the melted fat. Along with this implement, in the same grave, were found a long iron knife and a bronze spoon or ladle with a long iron handle.

DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS.—Considerable excitement has just been caused by the discovery between Alton and Farnham of some curious archaeological remains, consisting chiefly of human and other bones, and implements of war. Portions of no less than ten skeletons have been excavated, together with several brass and iron ornaments, the ribs and head of a horse, several arrow heads of iron or steel, and four swords with cross hilts, one of which is broken. There was also a monile, or horse necklace. On being exposed to the air, the bones crumbled to dust. The remains have been pronounced to belong to the thirteenth century, probably about the reign of Henry III. or his successor.

DR. LIVINGSTONE.—A letter dated Zanzibar, July 11, says:—"My friend the doctor is well. He has fairly passed the troublesome coast people, and is living with a good chief, who seems to have taken his fancy. He is with the head man of Elgonana, a place thirty miles above the point where he turned on our boat voyage up the Rosuma, at the confluence of the Liendi and Rosuma. He now proposes leaving some of his baggage with this man, and exploring the north end of Nyassa. Afterwards he will return to Elgonana, and re-fit for a longer trip to Lake Panganyita. We sent up his letters and a supply of quinine, and were to await his return. Our next chance will probably be to send supplies to meet him at Elzigi. I cannot say they will ever reach him, but they may."

CANNING, during a visit to Liverpool previous to his departure for India, gave the following eloquent description of the steamship. What would he have said had he lived to witness the success of the Atlantic Telegraph? We quote his words on the steamship:—"Which walks the water like a giant rejoicing in his course, stemming alike the tempest and the tide, accelerating intercourse, shortening distances, creating, as it were, unexpected neighbourhoods and new combinations of social and commercial relations; giving to the fickleness of winds and the faithlessness of waves the certainty and steadiness of a highway upon the land." How applicable in many respects are the above to the new communication between the old and mother countries!



[THE TOWN OF HEART'S CONTENT, TRINITY BAY, NEWFOUNDLAND: THE TERMINUS OF THE ATLANTIC CABLE ON THE WESTERN CONTINENT.]

OCEAN TELEGRAPHY.

Beyond doubt, the event of the present century, and one which will mark an epoch in the world's history, is the discovery of the magnetic telegraph, an account of which, and its inventor, or, more properly speaking, discoverer, we gave in our last number. Dr. Morse, however, in his most sanguine moments, could scarcely have dreamed that the child of his brain and genius would have produced so stupendous a result as the laying of cables by which two continents are brought into instant communication, and bound together by a multitude of ties. Of the importance of this result for the world's good, we may gather an idea from the words of the great American statesman, Mr. Seaward, who, in congratulating Mr. Cyrus Field on the success of the scheme, said: "If the Atlantic Cable had not failed in 1858, European States (and for the most part they had Southern propensities) would not have been led, in 1861, into the great error (and this error is, assuredly, now a proven fact) of supposing that civil war in America could either perpetuate African slavery or divide the Republic."

Last week we endeavoured to give our readers a notion of the vast extent to which the telegraph wires had been applied. The story, however, of submarine telegraph is even of more absorbing interest.

The first successful submarine telegraph was laid between England and France, a distance of twenty-four miles, in 1850, since which time a number of lines have been laid and satisfactorily worked. No one then dreamed of an Atlantic Cable, and in the development of electrical science then existing, such a dream would have proved wholly illusory. Experiments, however, soon demonstrated the fact that, under certain conditions, currents of electricity could be sent through submerged wires for any distance, and also showed how certain scientific difficulties attending their transmission could be obviated or removed. These facts established, the way for an ocean telegraph was fairly open, and all required were the genius to plan, and the energy and capital to execute. These were happily found, and through the efforts of Mr. Field, who had devoted a large share of attention to the subject, a company was formed in 1854 for the purpose of connecting the Old and New World with an ocean telegraph. In 1858 the cable was stretched across the Atlantic from Ireland to Newfoundland; messages were transmitted, and for a few days everything promised success, when, from some unknown cause, the wires ceased to convey signals, and the

project proved a failure. But the possibility and feasibility of the scheme were now demonstrated. Only its details required attention, and it was confidently believed that science and skill could overcome the difficulties in the way of success, and that the actual working of such a line was only a question of time.

That these difficulties were surmounted we have seen by the successful laying of the cable of 1866, which promises commercially to prove to the enterprising shareholders in the company who have found the capital a very Eldorado far exceeding even that of the New River, the shares of which are now of fabulous value.

This success, however, it must be remembered, was gained by the experience earned by more than one failure. To mention the last, in 1855, the cable, after having been paid out 1,040 miles, broke asunder, and became silent at the depth of 2,400 fathoms, and for a time the public mind, and capitalists lost all faith in an ultimate success; but—another proof of the power of mind over matter—it came at last, and monarch and president spoke their wondering congratulations to each other through it.

That success, however, astounding as it was, has been since surpassed by afeat, combined of science, perseverance, and capital, that has no peer in the world's history.

Success in laying the cable of the present year giving encouragement to the noble workers, they resolved to snare it once more out of the very jaws of failure; in other words, to recover the lost cable of 1855, and so, almost, at one and the same time to have a double line of communication. That they have done so is now patent to all, and by so doing they have achieved one of those marvellous and matchless feats whose importance it is difficult to estimate, and whose antecedent difficulties it is almost impossible to realize.

The enormous advantages of such a triumph can scarcely be overrated. It shows more than the possibility of merely laying a cable across the floor of the ocean. It shows that if a cable should become damaged, it may be brought again to the surface, and the faulty part rectified. So perfect are the present appliances of electricity that the *locality* of a "fault" is now readily discovered. It is now clearly shown that the breaking of an electric line—even in mid-ocean—is not necessarily a fatal blow to the undertaking. After a year's immersion a severed cable is recovered, spliced, and completed. To go out into the Atlantic and fish for a line as thick as one's thumb, at the depth where the peak of Teneriffe might plant its base, and yet fail to send its

summit above the waters, would seem about as hopeless an instance of deep-sea fishing as the mind of man could imagine.

By way of farther illustration, to fish for a lost anchor, or something equally cumbersome, was within the ordinary experience of the Ramsgate boatmen; but picking up a slender wire from the depths of ocean was as yet a thing unheard of. It was like lifting on the top of the monument and trying to lift a thread lying loose upon the pavement with a fish-hook at the end of a slender line, which could only reach the ground at all by a conjunction of lucky accidents, while the idea of its ever accomplishing its object seemed almost romantically absurd. But the recovery of the telegraph wire was, if possible, still more hopeless. The operator on Fish-street Hill would have the advantage of the daylight, and might use any ocular instruments he liked to facilitate his operations. But the crew of the Great Eastern had to drop their grapnels into the darkness as well as into depth; to drag the ocean floor for weary hours and days and weeks; to wait and watch for favourable indications till the eye was congested, the hand wearied, the brain worn; and to keep this up while they knew better, probably, than anyone else, how great were the odds against them.

It was no wonder that the public did not believe in the possibility of such an achievement, but now that the thing *has* been done, and we see how it has been done, it may always be said that the difficulty has not been over-estimated. It has been overcome by men who thought the achievement not impossible, but exceedingly difficult. They could measure the difficulty and adapt their means. They cannot even be called lucky, as having met with fine weather, or happened to hit on the right spot, for they had rather more than their share of gales, and dead calms, and fogs, and drifting currents, accidental failures, drawing of splices, miles of rope lost, twisting of grapnel flukes, breaking of strands, and noiseless slipping of the cable out of hold, no one knew how. The means were in proportion to the end, and were only just sufficient. Here was the largest ship ever built (the Great Eastern), and it was aided by two ships, one of them the Terrible, which once ranked high in the navy.

The grapnel ropes were several miles long, and made to stand the strain of many tons exactly measured by the dynamometer. There were first-rate seamen, first-rate electricians, first-rate engineers, first-rate cable-men, with every possible appliance. There were enormous iron buoys ready to be dropped instantly to mark a spot, or to hold the bight of the cable if it should be caught. The cable was caught

some half-dozen times, only to slip, to break the tackle, or to be itself broken. It was once recovered, and actually seen by mortal eye, with its white cozy coat; but only to be lost again.

It was necessary, at last, to sacrifice eighty miles of the cable, and to try a less depth, which, however, proved not much less. Who, indeed, can say that the task was found a bit less difficult than had been supposed when he attempts to realize this struggle with known and unknown difficulties? Think of the sunless skies, the midnight darkness, the loss of bearings, the separations, and the general absence of certain information or safe conjecture in which these ships were dredging for a cable hoped to be still in existence *three miles below* their keels. It was midnight when it made its appearance, as if from another world, and was secured. With this messenger from the deep a communication was immediately opened with fellow-labourers sitting on the cliffs of Valentia two thousand miles off, and with all the inhabitants of the civilized world.

Who, after this, dare say there is such a word as *impossible*?

The scene on board the Great Eastern on Sunday morning, September the 2nd, will be for ever memorable; its description reads like the pages of a romance. The Atlantic Cable of 1865 having been at length fished up, the excitement on board was indescribable, but for a time it was doubtful whether it retained its original powers. In the electrician's room awaiting the arrival of the "end," for the purpose of test, were Mr. Gooch, Mr. Cyrus Field, Captain Hamilton, Mr. Canning, Mr. Clifford, Professor Thomson, Mr. Deane, and others. At last Mr. Willoughby Smith, the chief electrician, made his appearance at the door with the end of the cable in his hand, and the connections having been made, he sat down opposite the instrument. A breathless silence prevailed. Not a word was spoken, all eyes being directed upon the operator, whose expression of countenance indicated the deep anxiety he felt in making the test. At the expiration of some ten minutes he relieved their suspense by stating that as far as he had then gone he believed the tests to be perfect; but another minute had scarcely elapsed when he took off his hat and gave a cheer, which, as can be easily understood, was lustily taken up in the room, and having been heard outside, it was echoed from stem to stern of the ship with a heartiness which everyone can appreciate.

Mr. Canning at once sent a message to Mr. Glass, the managing director of the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, expressing the pleasure he felt at speaking to him through the cable of 1865, and the operator at Valentia telegraphed back his congratulations.

Thus was the last greatfeat in history accomplished—viz., the unity of the new and old worlds.

How the news was received in England we know by the rise in the price of the shares in the company. How it was received at Heart's Content, the point of junction between the two continents, a view of which we give to our readers, the following, from an eye-witness, may best describe:

"The harbour," he says, "of Heart's Content presented a scene on the evening of Friday, the 27th of July, which will not easily be effaced from the memory of those who witnessed the final triumph of the Atlantic Telegraph Expedition of 1866. Securely anchored in its waters lay the Great Eastern, surrounded by her faithful convoy, while boats of all sizes and kinds flocked about her, laden with the inhabitants, who rushed on board to see the Leviathan ship and all her wonders. While this crowd of visitors were on board there was a silent gathering on shore, awaiting the landing of the cable from the Medway by the boats of the Terrible, to which that honour was assigned. Her large paddle-box boats, her cutters, pinnaces, and gigs were all brought into requisition, and, under the command of Lieutenant Streifford, the second lieutenant, conveyed it to the shore, close to one of the wooden fish-stages nearest to the telegraph-house, some three or four hundred yards distant from the water's edge. The Terrible's crew, accompanied by the leading cable-men, jumped into the water, and there was a hearty and animated struggle between them to see who should first bring the cable on shore."

Mr. Daniel Gooch, M.P., Captain Hamilton and Mr. Cyrus Field, directors of the Anglo-American Telegraph Company, with their secretary, Mr. John C. Deane, were there, awaiting the intimation which they were soon to receive from the telegraph-house that the cable had been connected with the instruments, and, still more, that it was in perfect electrical condition. Mr. Willoughby Smith, the chief electrician, soon pronounced the signals to be perfect from the Irish shore, and Mr. Gooch then sent a message to Lord Stanley.

A salute then was given in honour of Her Majesty of twenty-one guns each from the Great Eastern, Terrible, Nigger, and Lily, announcing the landing of the cable, and

the cheers which were given on shore were answered by those from the ships, over and over again. Early in the morning, before the Great Eastern entered the harbour, Mr. Gooch had received a reply to the message from the Queen to the President of the United States.

We may add, then, the town of "Heart's Content," for ever more memorable as the point of juncture of the telegraphic wires between the old and new worlds, is situated in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, and is of considerable importance to the fishing interest.

The harbour is spacious, and sheltered on all sides by high hills, protecting it from the fierce storms of the Atlantic, so that there is always a safe and commodious anchorage. The place is strongly fortified; in fact, its position is a defence, and it needs but little expenditure to render it secure from any ordinary assault.

BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "Self-Made," "All Alone," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

The conflict raged! The din of arms—the yell of savage hate—the shriek of agony—The groan of death, commingled in one sound of indistinguishable horrors; while the sun, Retiring slow beneath the plain's far verge, Shed o'er the quiet hills his fading light.

The pent-up feelings of years had at last found vent in that excess, and for a few minutes they were in ecstacy, albeit both lovers felt that it might prove at the same time their first and last. Still, let us repeat, it was ecstacy, for if heaven had ordained that he was to die of his wounds, Justin felt that by Britomarte's confession he had at length gained the gurdon after which he had so long panted, and which by years of manly affection and noble devotion he had fairly earned; while Britomarte, with a feeling of ecstasy, not unmixed with self-reproach and some dread at what might happen, now realized within her own heart that the love of a noble-minded man was a pearl of price, a blessing created by the Almighty himself as a reward for a pure and virtuous woman. In those few moments the mist had dissolved before her eyes, her man-hating principles vanished into thin air, and her mind and heart, united, had become as a *tabula rasa* on which, in the future, might be impressed the holy duties and affections of a wife.

But, hackneyed as true, the course of true love never did run smooth. In the midst of their now openly confessed affection, their hopes and fears, they heard the heavy tramp of armed men.

For one moment a gleam of hope shot through their minds. It might be a squad of Justin's own men in search of their colonel. But another minute and they were disillusioned, Rosenthal had surmised aright—it was a party of the enemy!

"Dearest, we are lost," exclaimed Britomarte, entwining her arms around his neck in a manner strangely contradictory to the uniform she wore; but resuming her assumed character, as the party came near, with marvellous rapidity, she began to play the rôle of an officer attending a wounded comrade.

"Hilton, whom have we here?" said the commander of the party, as his eyes lighted upon the pair. "Holy St. Patrick," he added, in a strong Irish accent, "it's a Saxon field-officer; bodad, we're in luck. His ransom'll be worth something, boys, that'll give us an extra cup o' the potheen each at laist."

"True. You are right, robber. I am Colonel Rosenthal," replied our hero, faintly, but with dignity.

"Ye are, are ye, then? bodad, I am right, too, touching the ransom ye'll be worth to me, to say nothing of the potheen to me boys here; but to say the laist, ye are mighty encivil in your names!"

By this time a portion of the party had surrounded their prisoners, and improvising a litter with their rifles, had lifted Justin thereon.

"Carry the colonel daintily, boys, and get the doctor to look at his wounds," said the commander.

"Surely you will not part us!" exclaimed, in agony, the woman Britomarte; but in an instant recovering her self-possession, she added, "True, we are your prisoners, but you will let us go together?"

"Bodad," was the reply, "not if I know it. But who," he added, "are you, my young bantum?"

"One of my officers, Captain Wing," said Justin, fearing that Britomarte might, in the terror of the moment, forget herself, and remembering that he had told her that her uniform would be her best protection.

Probably it would, but at that moment a voice, which seemed to come from the midst of some tall underwood, within a yard of where they were standing, cried:

"No, no! it's a woman!"

"Who can paint the surprise of one party, or the agony of the other?"

"The devil! but who are you?" cried the officer, adding, as two of his party dragged forth a wounded man from the thicket, "Bodad, it's Lary, whom we all thought dead and gone."

"Truth, ye are right, captain, it is Lary, and I just spoke to prevent myself being left here to die like a dog, and, maybe, to prevent you being taken in by a clever masquerading mixx."

"Be quiet, you baste," interrupted the officer. "No hard words to a lady." Then, turning to our heroine, with genuine politeness he desired to know who she was.

For a moment Britomarte was silent, then she replied, with dignity:

"A woman, as you fellow has unfortunately told you, and as such I demand to be treated with respect. Take me to your chief whoever he may be."

"Madam," replied the officer, "it's let you go. I would at once, but maybe you're a spy; in that case, woman or no woman, you must go before a bigger man than I."

"As you please," she replied, coolly, adding to her lover, "Farewell, and heaven take you in its holy keeping, colonel."

"Bodad," muttered the officer, "but if they may be lovers they are," and for an instant he seemed inclined to have let them both go; but probably remembering the rancour he divided his men into two parties, sending the commanding officer to colonel, and taking Britomarte with his own.

"Bodad," he added, as they began their work, "it's her name I'd like to know."

"Faith, then I can tell you," said Lary, "it's Bridget Martin; I heard her say so."

For a moment our heroine wavered at this, but remembering that the man giving her this name, by way of compromise, would keep her real name from them, she smiled with satisfaction, hoping that by the aid of gold she might soon obtain her liberty, and perhaps her lover's also.

But, alas, for human hopes and plans, for many, many months the lovers were parted, Britomarte remaining in the hands of her captors, confined in a dark, cell-like room, though for why or wherefore she could not discover, except, indeed, that they regarded her as a spy.

One consolation to her was, that she was known only as Bridget Martin.

With greater fortune, within three months of his capture, Justin managed to escape from his prison, but so broken down in health from the pains and privations of his captivity and wounds, that, when he reported himself at head-quarters, he was granted sick leave and repaired to his home, and then it required many weeks of Ermine's careful and skilful nursing before his strength could be restored.

Well and affectionately did his sister attend him during his long illness, and many were the sad hours they spent in wondering as to the fate of his beloved.

Nothing could be heard of her.

Ermine, knowing how detrimental to his perfect recovery was this agony of suspense, would day by day encourage his talking about the service he had seen, and the dangers he had passed through.

Moreover, she would elicit from him many anecdotes; one of these, as it relates to two of the characters of our tale, we will let the colonel relate for himself.

It originated thus:

"Did you see much of our old acquaintances, little Mim and Billingeoo?" asked Ermine. "You know they both joined as ensigns at the same time?"

"Yes, Ermine, frequently. The careers of the two, however, have been very different—the difference between that of a coward and a brave man, you know, for while Billingeoo is still a sub-lieutenant, Mim is a major, and on the staff."

"Little Mim promoted so far above Billingeoo! You surprise me!"

"Listen, then, and your surprise will vanish."

"Of course you know," he added, "that in every army there are to be found skulkers. Well, so it was with ours; and after one great battle parties were sent out to look after these same skulkers. One of these was headed by Major Mim."

"Well, in the course of Mim's ride in a neighbouring wood during the action, to his surprise he fell in with Billingeoo, lurking in a thicket. Had not the master been too serious, it was sufficiently ludicrous, yet partly after the latter fashion did Mim take it."

"Get up and go to your company, sir," said he.

"Oh, I can't! I can't indeed! Hear how the thots are cracking and thumping about! And look how the men are dropping! Oh, the poor fellow! oh, the poor, dear fellow! whimpers Billingeoo."

"For shame, sir! Get up, and go and help the

"poor fellows" you profess to feel so much sympathy for," said Mim.

"I can't! indeed I can't! The bullet holt! they do indeed, mathor! And the enemy fire without the thig! tell regard to a man's life! Oh, look how they are falling! Oh, the poor fellow! oh, the poor, poor fellow!" howled Billingcoo.

"The brave fellows, you mean; get up and imitate them."

"Oh, I couldn't! I couldn't for my life! I should be thertain to be killed! The enemy fire the careleth, not minding who they hit! I feel I should be killed!"

"Suppose you are killed, you paltron! what of it? A man can die but once!" exclaimed little Mim, thoroughly provoked.

"I tell you I've died a thousand death thith! I've been in the army! I've died a hundred death thith! I've been in thith thicket!"

"And you'll die hundred thousand more if you do not get over your cowardly fears! Look at that young fellow there!" said Mim, pointing to a young officer at some distance, who, with sword in hand, was gaily cheering on his men to the conflict.

Billingcoo looked; but at that moment a shell came tearing and driving its way through the woods, and when the smoke cleared away, a horrible picture was revealed between its rifts. The young officer stood in the same attitude, with his sword drawn and held at arm's length over his head, but his whole face was blown off, and nothing but a gory, crimson, quivering mass of flesh remained where it had been. For only an instant he stood thus, and then fell.

Billingcoo uttered a cry of horror and deadly terror, and threw himself forward upon the ground.

"Even Mim shuddered, and covered his eyes for a moment; but then, recovering himself, he looked up and said :

"It is all over by this time; the brave young fellow is out of his misery. Come, Billingcoo! I have been sent to hurry up all laggards. Get up! Pick up your sword and march!"

"I tell you I can't—there! and I won't neither—there! Do you think I want to have my fate blown to piethet like that young man? I say I can't and I won't go! I am religiouthly oppothed to war although, like a man, I purchased my commission!" answered Billingcoo, lifting his head for a moment, and then letting it fall.

"You say you can't and you won't! Well, I say you must and you shall!" exclaimed Mim, goading the sides of the prostrate coward with the point of his drawn sword.

"Oh! look here now! That hurh! Thup that!" cried Billingcoo.

"Get up, then, and go to your company!" said Mim, goading him more pointedly than ever.

"Oh, lord! oh, dear! oh, me! Thup that now, will you? It hurh, I tell you!"

"Get up, then!" repeated Mim, digging at him again.

But at that moment a Minié ball came whizzing towards them, piercing the leg of Mim and killing his horse, which instantly fell under him; so that both rider and horse rolled on the ground.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" shouted Billingcoo. "I don't bear you any ill-will, old fellow; but I do think it thereth you right, and I do thank the good-neth gratiouth alive for thith great deliveranah!"

And he jumped up, cut three or four capers in the air, and ran farther away out of gun-shot; for the battle was now surging nearer and nearer to them.

The next day, when the wounded were looked up, Mim was found with his leg hurt beside his dead horse. And some distance farther on Billingcoo was found dead—transfixed with a splinter, driven into his body by a shell that had torn its way through an old cabin behind which the poor creature, with his usual fatuity, had hidden himself in fancied security.

"Shocking!" exclaimed Ermine.

"All wars are shocking from a woman's point of view, Ermine; this story, however, is only another verification of the soldier's maxim, that every bullet has its billet."

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

Who knew, she thought, what the amazement
The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,
And if, in this morning of wonder,
No outlet mid lightning and thunder
Lay broad, and her shackles all shivered,
The captive, at last, was delivered?
Aye, that was the open sky o'erhead!
And you saw by the flash in her forehead,
By the hope in those eyes, broad and steady,
She was leagues o'er the free earth already.

Robert Browning.

"I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not!"

Ah! in all great cities, how many human beings there are "sick and in prison," whose lot is much more miserable than that of the poorest beggar who

enjoys the free air! These are not always criminals, but they are almost always friendless; for who dreams of "visiting them?"

Britomarte for many weary months remained a captive in the town held by her captors. The tediousness, the heaviness, the wretchedness of this captivity who can imagine?

She was a more than suspected spy, and as such, she was only saved from the usual fate of a spy by a consideration for her sex which restrained her captors, barbarous even as they were, from putting a woman to death.

Yet was her captivity even more bitter and terrible than death. She was, of course, debarred from books, newspapers, companionship, and from conversation, even with her guards. She could get no intelligence of her friends.

Whether Colonel Rosenthal had recovered, or had died of his wounds, or whether he were still a prisoner, she could not surmise.

In solitude, in silence, in idleness, in close confinement, intense anxiety and maddening suspense, the heavy days and nights, the horrible autumn and winter of her captivity crept slowly into the past. For months her brave soul bore nobly up.

But as the spring opened, bringing life and light and beauty to all the earth, but no ray of joy, or hope, or comfort, into her prison, her body, soul and spirit all broke down.

These were the darkest hours of her long, dreary night of misery, but like such hours, they fell just before the dawn of her now sweet day of joy.

It was Sunday, and the sweet Sabbath peace reigned over the neighbouring village.

Britomarte sat at the grated window of her cell, as she had sat—how many heavy days and sleepless nights! She was almost as fleshless as a skeleton, as bloodless as a corpse, and as hopeless as a lost spirit. She had been listening to the solemn Sabbath bells, watching young and old.

But now the bells had ceased to ring, her head drooped upon her hand, and she sat in dull despair, while the hours crept slowly by, and the sun sank slowly to his setting.

Then the cry of her heart went up:

"How long, oh, heaven! how long?"

Not long, oh, pale prisoner! The day of the Lord is at hand! The sun has set for the last time upon the prospects of thine enemies. Suddenly, she heard strange noises, and saw crowds of people hurrying past her prison. What did it portend—good or evil for herself and her fellow-prisoners? Who could say?

While she was enduring this suspense, the door of her cell was unlocked, and the guard, or turnkey, who attended her, brought in the cup of gruel that formed her usual supper.

For months she had ceased to speak to her guards, because they had been forbidden to hold any conversation with her. But now the unexplained uproar without, the excited looks of this man, and her own intense anxiety, irresistibly impelled her to question him.

"What is the matter outside?" she eagerly inquired.

He hesitated a moment, glanced at her anxious countenance, and then, with a harsh laugh, he answered:

"Don't you know? Your friends have been defeated—your army all destroyed!"

"My heaven!" exclaimed Britomarte; and the cup of gruel fell untouched from her hands.

Having told this bitter falsehood, the guard picked up the fragments of the broken cup, and, laughing sarcastically, left the cell, and locked the door.

Britomarte remained with her hands lifted in appeal to heaven.

Did she then believe the terrible tale? Not entirely; nor did the mocking guard expect that she would do so, but she pressed her face to the bars of her prison window, and watched and listened with "all" her eyes and ears to discover if possible the true cause of the now increasing uproar.

The night was now quite dark.

A torrent of human beings rushed through the town, a confusion of many tongues rose on the air.

"What can be the matter?" she asked of herself for the hundredth time—when, as if in response, suddenly there rolled up into the cool night air, against the clear purple sky, a huge, black, crimson and sulphurous volume of smoke.

"Heavens!" she exclaimed, "the town is on fire!"

The black and crimson smoke speedily burst into flame, and all the earth and all the heavens were lighted up as by a general conflagration.

So might have belched forth the subterranean fires of Vesuvius upon the doomed cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii!

Viewed from her window, the scene was wild, splendid and magnificent beyond any description. Against the broadening sheets of flame the town buildings stood up, black, stark and spectral, while all the

crowded streets between them formed a Pandemonium.

The ocean of fire rolled on and on. Every nook was intensely illuminated. The inside of her own cell was so dazzlingly lighted up that she had to close her eyes at intervals to relieve them of the blinding glare. And the sea of flames rolled on and on.

Britomarte sank to her knees, and covered her eyes, and bowed her head, and prayed—not in fear for herself, for she was brave to meet the fire, but in pity for the innocent children, the delicate women, the suffering invalids, and all the helpless and bareless that she thought must go down with the strong and the guilty in this general destruction.

Long and earnestly she prayed to heaven to mitigate the horrors of this most horrible night.

When at length she arose, and looked out upon the burning town, she beheld a scene which, in its sublimity, overwhelmed her senses, and brought to her appalled soul the vision of "that dreadful day, that day of wrath," when the firmament shall melt with a fervid heat, the heavens be rolled together as a scroll, and the sun, moon and stars be blotted out.

The flood of flame rolled and roared on and on with devouring fury; the rain of fire and burning cinders fell thick and blinding as a hailstorm.

Overcome with horror in her weakened condition, she who had often led the charge in person to the very cannon's mouth, now shrank away, covered her face with her hands, reeled and fell on her prison floor in a deadly swoon.

In mercifully permitted unconsciousness, she lay for nearly two hours.

When she recovered, day had dawned, and the unhallowed glare of the conflagration was fading in the blessed beams of the rising sun.

Sore, bewildered and confused, she arose and went to the grated window, and looked forth.

"Oh! joy! joy! joy! Deliverance at last! The street was filled with those who had been her old comrades.

And they were about to open her prison doors!

They were officered by a young man, who rode hither and thither, maintaining order among his men.

Britomarte knew him, or had known him, as Little Mim, and he had known and admired her, but only as Miss Conyers. Afterwards, when she was known as Captain Wing, and he has Ensign Mim, she had recognized him again, but he had not identified her in her new character.

She seized the bars of her grated window, and shook and rattled them; she put her wasted hand through them and waved it; she called and shouted, but her voice was weak and the din below was deafening, so that she failed to attract attention until Major Mim, happening to look up, saw the wasted hand waving through the grated window. He did not recognize Miss Conyers then, but he saw that the pale hand belonged to an imprisoned woman, and that was quite enough to fire the blood of such a devoted "squire of dames" as Major Mim.

Calling to four or five subordinate officers to follow him, he entered the prison. There were none to resist him. The guards had run away hours before.

Britomarte, in her cell, heard the rushing footsteps of her deliverers. They spread themselves throughout all the lobbies of the prison.

But the party led by Little Mim came hurrying towards her door, and paused in much excitement before it. This door was locked and barred on the outside, and it required some little time and force before it could be broken open.

Then Major Mim, with his face fiery from exertion and excitement, rushed in.

"You are free, madame!" he exclaimed, lifting his cap to Britomarte, but failing to recognize her.

"Don't you know me, Major Mim? Don't you know me?"

"Heaven and earth! It is Miss Conyers!" exclaimed Little Mim, in consternation.

"Or what remains of her," added Britomarte, with a wan smile.

"In the name of Providence, how came you here?" demanded Mim.

"I was taken as a suspected spy. The story is too long to tell you now, major. But tell me—Colonel Rosenthal—"

"He is safe and well, thank heaven!"

"Thank heaven, indeed," echoed Britomarte.

"Would that I could say the same of many another old comrade; but there is one whose loss we all deplore."

"Indeed," exclaimed Britomarte, whose curiosity had become excited, "whom?"

"A gallant young fellow, Miss Conyers, we used to call the 'Destroying Angel,' on account of his fiery impetuosity. He who was adored in the whole brigade. What was his name, again? I am the worst hand at names. I seem to get the idea without the word. What was it, again? Bird?—No. Dash?—

No. Spring?—No. But it was something with a rush in it. Wing? That was it. Ah, poor fellow! "What of him?" inquired Britomarte, suppressing a laugh.

"Missing—missing for nearly a year past. Dead, of course. Colonel Rosenthal has done all he could to discover traces of his fate, but in vain. And I really think the uncertainty preys upon the colonel."

"Perhaps Wing may yet be found," suggested Britomarte.

"Heaven grant it. Yet it is not likely. Come, Miss Conyers! you look worn and wasted. Let me take you somewhere where you can be comfortably lodged and refreshed. My colonel, O'Neil, has his quarters at hand. His wife is with him. I know they will gladly welcome you. Will you let me take you there for the present?"

"Thanks, yes! Anywhere—anywhere—out of this horrible place!" said Britomarte.

Major Mim ordered an ambulance to be brought up, placed Miss Conyers in it, and conveyed her to the quarters of his colonel, where she was warmly welcomed, and affectionately tended by that gallant officer's amiable wife.

(To be continued.)

THE SPURS OF MUSTAPHA HASSAN.

"AWAY with the presumptuous dog! Wouldst thou cast dirt upon the board of a faithful follower of the Prophet? Scum of the earth, take thyself out of my sight, nor cross again the threshold of my home."

These words were vociferated in an angry tone, as Yusef Hassan kicked contemptuously at a guitar lying across the low bench used for a counter in his shop, and, at the same time, motioned a young man standing calmly before him towards the doorway, which gave a narrow glimpse of a Constantinople street.

"These are bitter words to come from the lips of my father's brother. As deadly as the breath of the simoom. What have I done that Yusef Hassan speaks so harshly?" asked Ali Hassan, in a tone of astonishment.

Yusef glared at him, till the little lead-like eyes seemed turning from jet to carbuncle.

"What have you done?" hissed he. "By the beard of the Prophet, the dog's insolence is as bad as his villainy! What have you done indeed? Ask this accurse playing of fools?"

And again he kicked vindictively at the poor guitar. Ali Hassan looked at the inflamed, angry countenance in mingled doubt and alarm.

"I must hie away for a leech. Holy Mahomet! Yusef Hassan has gone crazed," murmured he.

A volley of imprecations from Yusef, and a fierce command to pause, brought his nephew back from the door to which he had hastened with the intention of seeking a physician.

"Crazed with anger at the folly and ingratitude of a graceless dog who has been fed by my bounty, that is all!" roared Yusef. "The medicine I shall need will be for you to take yourself away out of my sight. Go!"

"What have I done?" demanded Ali, more perplexed than ever.

Yusef so far forgot the dignity besemming a faithful follower of the Prophet as to make up a horrible face while he mimicked the young man's tone.

"What have you done? An innocent knave indeed! Have you not taken your foolish face and your womanish voice, and that silly guitar under the lattice of Saidee, the fair daughter of Beda Mustapha? and is not the beautiful Saidee betrothed to me by her father's free will and consent?"

Ali's fine dark eyes were as round as saucers.

"Saidee to be your wife!" exclaimed he—and then, overcome with irresistible mirth, he burst into a fit of laughter, which more than all the rest increased the frenzy of poor old Yusef.

"You graceless ingrate! You insolent dog. How dare you laugh at me?" vociferated he, shaking his fists, and dancing up and down with rage, notwithstanding the peril it threatened to his gouty feet.

"But—it is so strange, my uncle. One cannot help laughing. Saidee has seen fewer years than I, and you are older than my father. It is like summer and winter joining hands. What does Saidee say to you?" And as best he could Ali smothered another laugh.

"What matter to me, since her father gives her to me for a wife? Yusef Hassan knows how to enforce obedience. I may ask of you, traitorous dog, what she said when she came out into the garden to meet you, after your foolish songs had told her you were near? Deny it not, for by my father's beard, I saw you two go hand-in-hand into the arbour in Beda Mustapha's garden."

"Well," said Ali, not without a tone of exultation, "Saidee told me, with a voice as sweet as the nightingale, with two roses outgrowing the pink leaves of

the cashmere blossom on her cheeks, and with star beams stealing through the downcast lashes from her beautiful eyes, Saidee said that she loved me, and that she would marry me when I was able to take a wife to a home of my own."

"And when did you think that would be?" sneered Yusef.

"When my good uncle gave me a share of his business, as he has so long promised. I thought it could not remain much longer," answered Ali, in a demure tone.

"When I give you my curse!" roared Yusef. "Away with you out of my sight, and never darken my door again."

"Do you mean it, Yusef Hassan?" asked Ali.

"By the Prophet! you shall find it out. Meddling with the daughter of Beda Mustapha, who is promised to me."

"But I did not know it, and Saidee would not marry you if she had not seen Ali Hassan."

"We will see. Do we ask the maiden's consent when we take a Turkish wife? Inshallah! She shall be my wife in two months from this day. And for you, get you out of my sight, and take my curse with you, thankless viper!"

"I am not thankless; I owe you nothing, Yusef Hassan. You took all my father's possessions, and changed them into piastres to stock your shop with. They paid you well for the poor care dealt out to me when I was a child. And what you have doled out to me since has been twice paid by the work I have done for naught. I will go, but let us not part in anger, because we are kinsmen, and it might grieve the son of Mustapha Hassan in the bowers of paradise to know we were enemies."

So spake Ali Hassan, moving slowly towards the door. Yusef shook his fist wrathfully after him.

"Go, and if you dare to show yourself in Beda Mustapha's garden, or about his grounds, make yourself ready for the bowstring, for by the beard of the Prophet, you shall die!"

"Is not fair-play allowed to me? You are old and rich. I am young and poor. Inshallah! it shall be a fair race to run, to see which wins the prize. But give me at least some little token to remember my father by, though you send me away without a piastre after my faithful service," said Ali, not even losing his temper.

Yusef glanced around him carelessly, and catching up an old blackened, begrimed pair of spurs, tossed them after him.

"There is as good a fortune as your father left you. They were among the rubbish of his effects. Take them—and the best wish I have for you—that what they will bring you may be the richest portion you will ever get. May all your fortune come from Mustapha Hassan's spurs. Inshallah! I have spoken."

Ali picked up the spurs, put them in his pocket, and taking the guitar, went forth from his uncle's dwelling, and found temporary shelter with an old cobbler, to whom he had rendered assistance once or twice in a dilemma, which kindness the poor old man was glad enough to requite.

Ali was young and strong and healthy, and he was sure of pretty Saidee's good-will. He did not feel inclined to despair, not even when, after application to one or two hardware merchants, he was roughly refused a situation in their shops.

"One must not be wroth at a little cloud now and then. The Prophet will send sunshine presently upon his faithful follower," said he, and set off to meet the pretty daughter of Beda Mustapha according to agreement, when the moon was bright upon the fountain in a certain kiosk enclosure.

The pretty Saidee was weeping beneath her thick veil, when Ali came upon her, leaning in the shadow of the trees.

"What cloud has veiled the light for my star of the East?" asked Ali, tenderly, but guessing pretty accurately at the cause of her grief.

"Alack! the sorrows of Saidee have begun," replied the maiden. "What thinkest thou? My father called me to him to-day, and bade me make ready to receive a husband, saying that he had a mind to bestow me upon Hassan, the saddle merchant. I folded my arms and bowed my head to the decree, answering him that he should find Saidee a dutiful daughter. Inshallah! Ali Hassan, I thought only of thee, and my heart was glad within me, for I made sure that thine uncle had relinquished his shop into thy hands. My father said it was well, and that I should give the answer myself unto his good friend. So I went gaily, as he bade me, into the court, and behold there was thine ugly, wrinkled old uncle! The heart within me failed at the first sight of his leering face. But I said, plucking up courage:

"Thou comest to urge the suit of thy kinsman. Thou wilt take me to Ali Hassan. Whereupon, oh, Ali, his anger was terribly aroused. He called thee many a vile name, which stirred me to resentment, and I answered hotly, that he might keep his foul words

for himself, since they fitted best to him, and naked him if it were for that he came thither, and sent for me."

"Then he turned fiercely upon me, and said he had paid the portion to my father, and that I was his wife. At which I laughed scornfully, which seemed to infuriate him beyond all else. He went straight away, and found my father, and then came back to me, and then, Ali, I had something of an idea how the demons of Hades may vex the lost soul, for between them both they had well-nigh driven me distraught with their angry reproofs and bitter threats. My father locked me in my chamber, but faithful Lula found means to free me, and I have come hither to ask thee what can be done, for in another week I am to be taken to the house of Yusef Hassan."

And when she had finished this long recital, which had been broken by floods of tears and sobs, the pretty Saidee flung herself into Ali's arms for comfort and relief. Poor Ali's heart for the first time sank like a stone. What should he do? Oh! that he had but the poorest house in Constantinople to offer Saidee as a refuge from the persecutions of his uncle and the cruelty of her father; but here he was owing the half-starved cobbler the very shelter of his roof for himself. What possible help could he give to Saidee? He groaned aloud in his anguish, and related to her dismayed ears the sorrowful plight in which he stood—turned away from his uncle's shop without a piastre in return for his services—and with only the rusty pair of spurs left of his father's fortune.

"I thought to find no difficulty in finding work at other saddlers," said he, ruefully, "but Yusef Hassan has poisoned all their ears. They say to me, 'You have done some bad thing, or Yusef Hassan, who we thought was to make an heir of you, would never have turned you away.' And so they will have naught to do with me. Saidee, beloved one, what can be done, for you must never be made the wife of Yusuf Hassan?"

When the pretty Turkish maiden perceived her lover's despondency, woman-like, she flung off her own fears, and spoke up bravely and cheerfully.

"Let us not be down-hearted, my Ali. There are seven days yet. With the Prophet's blessing it will be plenty of time to make your fortune. I will go home again, and cheat them into believing me reconciled to marry old Yusef. Thou shalt do thy best to woo the smile of fortune. I will come hither on the last day of that week, and then we can tell better what must be done. Keep up a brave heart, Ali, and thou shalt make a way of escape for me, even in seven days."

Ali was thoroughly disheartened, but he made a show of cheerfulness, and stealing a kiss from the sweet lips under the shrouding veil, he promised Saidee to do his best and take no rest from his efforts to obtain employment.

He went back to the cobbler's poor old shell of a house, and sat down to deliberate. But it was rather sorry work. What could the most adroit or determined person make out of such scanty means, work from such a meagre material? His reputation and credit were ruined by the wicked spite of his uncle, and he had no capital of his own to make a start for himself, nothing except that pair of spurs. He took them from his pocket, and looked at them rather dismally. They were certainly good solid affairs. Sold for old iron they might give him a single meal. They were black and grimy with the dust of many a year. Mechanically Ali took up a rag, dipped it into water, and took up some sand.

"I will clean them up, at all events," said he. "I may as well make my stock in trade appear to the best advantage."

He scrubbed away, heedlessly at first, but presently with eager interest. For behold beneath the grinding sand the black, begrimed surface was growing bright and of a rich yellow. Ali uttered an exclamation of mingled astonishment and pleasure as he perceived it, and worked with a will.

The perspiration stood in great beads on his forehead when the first one was finished, but he held it up exultantly.

"Gold! pure gold!" he exclaimed, in transport. "I remember something now about these spurs being given my father by some great person, and that he was very choice of them until he fell into his dotage. Perhaps he allowed them to grow tarnished to keep them out of my uncle's greedy clutches. It is certain Yusef Hassan never suspected their precious metal, or he would not have given them up to me."

Ali worked industriously, cleaning and polishing, and at length was in possession of as solid and handsome a pair of golden spurs as was in Constantinople that day outside the grand vizier's palace.

He put them carefully into his pocket, and taking the little affair as an omen of dawning good fortune, he sallied forth into the streets bright and early the next day in search of employment.

He had fairly obtained permission to come to work

at one of the royal saddleries when he saw his uncle approaching. He darted out of sight as quickly as possible, very well knowing if his vindictive relative suspected how matters stood he would soon spoil all his prospects. Precipitate as was the retreat, Yusef, Hassan's lynx eyes spied him out and guessed the nature of his business there, and a very few words to the master of the business settled the matter.

When Ali came the next day, full of eagerness and hope, he was quietly informed that a bad character had been given him by his late employer, and they would have nothing to do with him.

Nearly distracted with rage and despair, poor Ali returned to the street in which the cobbler had his stall.

He was hungry and faint, in addition to his anguish of mind, and presently came to the resolution that the golden spurs which he had fondly hoped to save must be sacrificed.

Sighing deeply, he took them in his hand, and walked slowly and reluctantly towards the goldsmiths' quarters. He found a great commotion in the square.

The walls of a building, wonderfully tall for Constantinople, had fallen, having been left standing without support after being partially burned, and several Armenians and two Turkish men were buried beneath the ruins.

The Turkish police, with their usual inefficiency, were running hither and thither, and doing nothing. While they kept the foreigners, who were zealously anxious to assist the poor wretches smothering under the *debris* from near approach, they had not as yet made the first movement towards removing the beams and stones on their own part.

A low murmur of indignation arose from a crowd of Armenian women whose husbands and brothers were meeting such a horrible death, which grew into a sullen roar of rage when the proffered help was thrust back. The bystanders joined, and for a little while it seemed as if there would be a general riot in the street, and nothing whatever done for the sufferers.

Ali Hassan standing there, looking on attentively, felt the same indignation burning on his cheek, and sparkling in his eye.

"It is a shame in the sight of the Eye of the East!" he muttered, angrily. "I would that the Sultan could look on and see their stupidity. They would not be long in authority."

"You are right," said a low but firm, authoritative voice at his side.

Ali turned in curiosity to look at the speaker, and discovered that a horseman had reigned his steed close beside him, and that it was he who had spoken. He could not discover much by the closest scrutiny he was able to give; for there was no sign of rank in his plain dark clothing, and his face was nearly hidden by the long drooping tassel of the *fez*. Yet somehow Ali got the impression that he was a person of authority. He looked a moment on the imbecile police, and then, with an angry frown, wheeled his horse about. But the crowd and shouting, and perhaps also his rider's irritation, had disturbed the animal, and he would not go forwards.

"Inshallah!" exclaimed the stranger, "If I had but a pair of spurs, he should obey, and help should come hither speedily."

Ali had his sole fortune clutched tightly in his hand, but he stretched them out eagerly.

"See! here are spurs, and they are precious ones to me. They are all I own of any value, and were left me by my father. I was going to carry them to a goldsmith to get me a supper, for I have tasted naught to-day. But I will lend them to you freely if you will bring help speedily to these poor wretches, and give them back to me to-night."

"By my father's beard, you have a generous spirit. Tell me your name and whether I shall send the spurs, and put them on right speedily." Ali obeyed, and the stranger went galloping off and disappeared from sight with Ali's golden spurs on his heels. It must be admitted, Ali for the moment repented of his generous spirit, and ruefully queried if he should ever set eyes upon them again. But presently there arrived a detachment of the Sultan's guards and the seraskier, and a special order from the Sultan taking away all authority from the policemen; and then Ali was jubilant again, for he felt sure that the stranger was a personage of influence and had brought it all about. And he felt quite confident of the return of his sole treasure, and went back supplerless to the cobbler's stall, but in tolerable spirits, since the poor buried wretches had been extricated, all of them still surviving.

He waited feverishly all the evening long and the next day, but no messenger appeared, no spurs were returned.

He accepted a crust from the cobbler, and sat down disconsolately, ready to curse his ill luck and his folly. Another day came and went, and poor Ali was well-nigh distracted.

But just at nightfall a pair of lackeys, in a very

rich livery, made their appearance at the wretched stall of the cobbler, and made inquiries for Ali Hassan. Ali rushed forth in eagerness, but fell back dismayed when told that they had orders to take him before the grand vizier himself.

"What have I done?" asked he, ruefully. "It is some wicked accusation of Yusef Hassan. I am an innocent but most unfortunate wretch. My fate is too hard for me; I had only one hope, and that was stolen from me. Inshallah, a man like me might well await the hour of his birth."

The lackeys could give him no explanation. They were only obeying their orders, and, dismal and forlorn, Ali accompanied them towards the seraglio.

Yusef Hassan, meanwhile, was rejoicing in the success of his machinations against his nephew's advancement, and basking in the prosperity which seemed to promise the fulfilment of all his wishes.

The daughter of Beda Mustapha had wisely concluded to forego her first animosity, as he flattered himself, and would give him no further trouble. She had treated him with kindness, if not cordiality, and received the rather ordinary presents he had seen fit to bestow upon her, graciously, if not thankfully.

Yusef was making as extensive preparation for the wedding festival as his sordid soul would allow, and though it had cost him many a heart pang, he had furnished a really pretty boudoir for his youthful bride.

Beda Mustapha was content, Yusef Hassan was hilarious, but how was it with the fair Saidee in reality? The pretty little creature had kept up a good heart until her trusty messenger came back from a fruitless errand to the cobbler's stall, with the news that Ali Hassan had been arrested, and carried away by some of the seraskier's emissaries, since when his humble friend had heard no word from him.

Then poor Saidee fell into a deep distress, and prepared herself for the worst that could befall her. She kept her promise, however, and was at the trysting-place the evening before the marriage day. The kiosk square was silent and deserted. Trembling and despairing, Saidee waited there two long interminable hours—but no signs of Ali.

She was tempted to fling herself into the Bosphorus when she thought of Yusef Hassan, but she had no courage, and still clung to a wild, forlorn hope that Ali might yet appear. So she crept back silently to her home, to weep away the hours of the dreary night.

Yusef Hassan made it in his way down to the bazaar to stop at Beda Mustapha's house on that morning of his wedding-day, and make sure that his bride was still contented and complaisant. Beda lagged at his persistence, but finally summoned his daughter into the little ante-room to satisfy him that she had not been spirited away.

Saidee had pale cheeks, and two pink circles around her eyes which old Yusef eyed suspiciously, but she answered his remarks with a meek, frightened smile, which assured him there would be no attempt at rebellion on her part. He gave her a glowing description of the boudoir waiting her, presented her with a coral necklace, and took his departure with the assurance that, at the appointed hour, he should be there with a suitable retinue to escort her to her future home. Saidee listened, and drearily wondered why she had not found courage to end her sorrows under the cool waves of the Bosphorus the previous night.

The tirewomen who came at Beda Mustapha's bidding to deck out the bride, noticed her listlessness and indifference while they fastened the golden-coloured veil over her luxuriant tresses, and clasped the pearly necklace and bracelets on her fair throat and beautifully moulded arms; but that was not so remarkable an occurrence. Many and many a bride whom their professional duties called them to was equally passive and unconcerned. But their astonishment was really excited when, upon trying the drooping eyelids with henna and indigo, to produce the much-admired jetty eyelash, they found the tears slowly slipping through and spoiling their work.

"What ails the girl? Has she been bewitched by the evil eye?" asked they of Beda Mustapha. "She weeps her salt tears, while we are decking her in gay attire. She does not look at her bracelets. She has not once smiled at our work."

"She is a silly child, who does not see her own good," answered Beda. "Her thoughts are with a young fellow who has gone to the dogs before this. But Yusef Hassan knows how to manage her. He will bring her to her senses if anyone can."

"What, old Yusef? Does he take a wife at this late day? Of a truth the damsel has some reasonableness, for the old fellow has no comeliness or good manners to stone for his lack of youth."

Saidee heard this speech and sighed still more wearily under the gilded strands of the bridal veil.

"Oh, Ali, Ali, what has become of you? Where is the succour you promised to bring me?" wailed she, peering forth from her lattice with despairing eyes.

"Is it the youthful lover you are watching for?" asked one of the tirewomen, touched to compassion by the girl's wistful face.

Saidee burst into tears, as she replied, in a low, guarded voice.

"Oh, if someone would have pity upon me, and go to the cobbler Baba, and ask if naught have been heard yet from Ali Hassan. If it be possible, get Ali word that there are only three hours now in which to save me from his uncle."

"I will do it myself," said the woman, promptly. "I'll say I want another ribbon to tie up your beautiful hair, and you may be sure I'll not let the grass grow under my feet. So take heart, my pretty one. I had a daughter myself once, and she knew who was to love her husband and lord; for her sweet sake, I'll do the good turn to you."

Saidee whispered her tearful thanks, and the woman sped away on her humane errand. But she returned shortly, and said, sorrowfully:

"I grieve for you, my child. Baba says he knows naught more concerning your Ali. He thinks he is in prison, or maybe has been shot for some unknown misdemeanor. But he only knows that two men of authority took him away, and no sign has come from him since!"

"He is dead," said Saidee, in a hollow voice of despair. "If he were alive and at liberty, I know he would have met me at the kiosk garden."

"Then thou must try to look pleasantly upon Yusef, and forget that he is not the husband of thy choice," advised the discreet tirewoman.

But the very name of Yusef was odious to poor Saidee. And she turned away shuddering when her father came to tell her that the bridegroom was coming with the gay sedan, and its richly dressed bearers, to take her away.

She heard the music in the street, and Yusef's cracked voice below in the courtyard, and wrung her hands. But there was no help for it. The tirewoman flung around her the great mantle covering her from head to foot, and her father led her down the stairs. Yusef, his sallow, wrinkled face beaming with smiles of exultation, himself put her into the sedan and dropped the silken curtains.

"Ha, ha, Ali Hassan. We shall see who wins the fair daughter of Beda Mustapha," said he, half audibly.

At that moment there came a low shriek from within the sedan, and a pair of white arms were stretched forth imploringly, on the opposite side from that where Yusef had just dropped the curtains.

A troop of Turkish cavalry was dashing briskly up the square, and at their head rode a finely formed, handsome young officer, upon a superb snow-white charger, whose mountings were all of the most costly kind. The breast of the officer sparkled with decorations. His sabre sheath was tipped with gold; the tassel of his scarlet-velvet *fez* was one ripple of glittering gold thread. His saddle cloth was of the costliest velvet, richly embroidered, and the young man's handsome face and graceful form well became the magnificent trappings. His soldiers rode behind him with the most obsequious air.

Lifting his hand in a careless gesture of command, the young officer cried to the bearer of the sedan:

"Halt! I command you to pause, in the name of his imperial highness our illustrious Sultan."

"What right, what reason can you offer for stopping a peaceable bridal procession?" asked Yusef, indignantly, but without daring to use any but a respectful tone.

"It is not a peaceful procession; the bride is unwilling; besides, she is promised to another. Inshallah, you have no right to her."

"I understand not your speech. It has no meaning to my ears," said Yusef, sullenly, for the rich trappings and uniform, the gallant bearing and unwonted accompaniments had so changed his nephew's appearance that he did not recognize him.

"Where is Ali Hassan?" demanded the young officer, sternly. "The maiden gave her troth to him."

"The graceless dog has disappeared; he has met his just deserts."

"You turned him away without a plastron. You persecuted him so that he could obtain no honest employment. And you kept the money paid in as his father's annuity, and said nothing of it to anyone. Dog art thou, Yusef Hassan; and but that thou art a brother of Mustapha Hassan, thou shouldst feel the bowstring this very night."

"Who are you?" asked Yusef, staring at him in mingled fear and astonishment.

There was another little cry of joy from the sedan. The eyes of love had pierced quickly through fine array and marvellous surroundings of authority.

"Look and see, Yusef Hassan," said the officer, taking off the *fez*, and bending his face down to the full observation of the gaping old Yusef.

"Ali Hassan! by my father's beard!" ejaculated Yusef. "What does it mean? Are my eyes bewitched?"

"Your eyes do not play you as false as your tongue has done many a time before this," answered Ali. "You drove me off with curses, but, Yusef, a curse of yours has been my best blessing. You sent me out to perish of starvation, poisoning the ears of all the tradesmen, that none should take me in. You laughed with scorn at the fortune you gave me, my father's spurs and my uncle's curse. Well, Yusef, it was they and nothing else which procured my great advancement and saved my Saidee. It will be punishment enough for you to know that. You thought the spurs useless iron. Inshallah! Yusef, if you had only polished them up as I did, you would have discovered they were pure gold with the Sultan's private mark upon them. There is a dagger for your greedy, avaricious soul! Look at them. See that I lie not."

And as he spoke, Ali thrust forth his heel and showed the golden spurs fastened there.

Yusef grew purple in the face.

"They are not the ones. You have stolen them," gasped he.

"Take care what tones you use. My soldiers yonder will not brook any disrespect to their commander, and their weapons are keen. I tell you these are the same. By Allah's blessing, I chanced to give them to the grand seigneur himself, and that brought out the whole story. He remembered that he had given them to the man who saved him from the street assassin, and when he knew I was his son he demanded to know why I was half-starved and despairing when the humanity he had given was still paid to my uncle. Ali, Yusef, you would not care to see how black with wrath his face grew when I told my story! You would wear a more gracious look to me if you knew how long I pleaded to save you from the bowstring. Your ill-gotten gains will be taken from you, but your head is safe, thanks to my intercession."

Ali waved his hand authoritatively, and the soldiers closed around Yusef Hassan. Then Ali, with a beaming smile, rode to the side of the sedan, and drew back the curtain. Saidee was still weeping—whether with pain or joy, she hardly knew.

As the handsome, gallant face looked in through the curtains, she blushed with joy, though she faltered, in timid tones:

"Ali, Ali, have you found a fairy spell that has transformed you into a prince? Alack! I have lost you, as surely as though you were really in prison."

"Nay, nay, my Saidee. The good luck that has befallen me is for you also. Behold, I have come at this hour that I might take you at once to my home. The Sultan himself gives you to me, Saidee, so that even if your father were still opposed to me, he could not hinder. Allah be praised! It is all as beautiful as before it was wretched. I have a fine home for you, my Saidee, and the Sultan has heaped favour after favour upon me. I have everything in readiness for my beautiful wife. Smile upon me, my Saidee, and we will go to our new home."

At that moment Beda Mustapha, who had stood in open-mouthed astonishment beholding and listening to all that had passed, came a few paces towards them, making a profound obeisance to the young man in the brilliant uniform of the Sultan's favourite guard.

"Well, Beda Mustapha, what hast thou to say?" asked Ali, coldly.

"I came to give my blessing to my daughter, your excellency," said Beda Mustapha, with another profound bow.

"By my father's beard, it would have been of sorry comfort to poor Saidee, that blessing of thine, hadst thou sent her off to Yusef Hassan's dismal house to be an old man's slave. But let it pass now. We will try to forget all past unkindness. Dost thou give the maiden freely, Beda Mustapha, unto poor Ali Hassan?"

"It is too much honour for a poor tradesman, that a noble officer should take his daughter as a wife. Beda Mustapha can hold up his head proudly in the sight of all his kindred after this. A glamour has been over his eyes or he would have discerned the true greatness of your excellency, under the humble disguise assumed."

"Hum," quoth Ali, with a merry glance into Saidee's face. "My greatness was in a wonderfully small space a little time ago. I am sorely afraid neither Beda Mustapha nor Yusef Hassan had ever discovered a grain of it if Allah had not smiled upon me, and sent me into the pathway of His illustrious highness the Sultan. Strange chances come from little things, dear Saidee, and Yusef was my best benefactor, little as he meant it, when he flung after me, with his bitter revilements, the dingy old spurs of my father. Truly we must honour them, and hold them as a precious heirloom. Inshallah, they were better than all Yusef's fortune. *The Spurs of Mustapha Hassan.*"

M. J. C.

A COMPANY of English opera singers have been wrecked and cast away on an uninhabited island in the China seas. They were on a voyage to Hong

Kong from San Francisco in the ship *Libelle* when the accident took place, on the 4th of March last. The passengers escaped death and got upon Wake Island, but after staying there three weeks, they took to sea in the ship's boats, and endured great suffering and privation. One boat reached the coast of China after a voyage of thirteen days: the other boat parted company after the first day, and had not been heard of. Madame Anna Bishop and Mr. Charles Lascelles were among the saved. The £76,000 in specie which the ship carried was buried for safety on Wake Island.

FACETIE.

WHY is love like a Scotch plaid?—Because it is all staff, and often crossed.

He who pokes his nose everywhere will sometimes prick it between a thumb and forefinger.

We notice an advertisement of "milliners' feathers" for sale. The milliners from whom these feathers were plucked must have been little ducks.

WHEN has a lady more water in her system than when she has a cataract on her eyes, a creek in her back, a waterfall on her poll, and her shoes high-tied?—When she has a notion (an ocean) in her head.

THE COBBLER'S SECRET.

A waggish cobbler once in Rome
Put forth a proclamation
That he'd be willing to disclose,
For due consideration,
A secret which the cobbling world
Could ill afford to lose—
The way to make, in one short day,
A hundred pair of shoes.

From every quarter to the right
There ran a thousand fellows—
Tanners, cobblers, boot-men, shoe-men,
Jolly leather-sellers—
All redolent of beer and smoke,
And cobbler's wax and hides;
Each fellow pays his thirty-pence,
And calls it cheap besides.

Silence! The cobbler enters,
And cast around his eyes;
Then curls his lip, the rogue, then frowns,
And then looks wondrous wise.
"My friends," he says, "tis simple, quite,
The plan that I propose,
And every man of you, I think,
Might learn it if he chose.

A good sharp knife is all you want,
In carrying out my plan;
So easy is it, none can fail,
Let him be child or man.
To make a hundred pair of shoes,
Just go back to your shops,
And take a hundred pair of boots,
And cut off all the tops!"

WHEN the late Lord Alvanley fought a duel at Wormwood Scrubs, and got home safe again, he gave the hackney coachman a guinea. "It is not for taking me there," said he, "but for bringing me back."

A YANKEE horse-tamer advertises a performing horse that will kick a cigar out of the mouth of any one of the audience who chooses to let him, without touching the face of the smoker.

A PARISIAN paper thinks English people should not be so particular about the little blue mist discovered by Mr. Glaisher, when England is eternally enveloped in a mantle of fog. A mist certainly exists in almost every Frenchman's mind about England; and paradoxical as it may appear to him, he can only get rid of that mist by going to England; and the longer he stays there the less mist he will have.

ENGLISH CANDOUR.—A Bolton gentleman was visiting the Pasha of Egypt, and after being introduced was asked through an interpreter if there were any information that might be received as useful. "Yes," said the Bolton friend, "if you would send your cotton cleaner to England it would be much better." The Pasha looked very serious. He might have resented it by ordering the gentleman to be decapitated; but the Grand Pasha managed things better, and his cotton has been sent much cleaner ever since.

A POLICEMAN "SERVED OUT" BY A TAR.—A Birkenhead police-officer some eight or nine months since arrested a sailor for violating the local Act by jumping off a ferry steamer instead of passing along the gangway. The sailor, who was fined by the magistrates, gave a good-humoured wink at the officer, and remarked that he would remember him. Next day Jack carefully cut out the newspaper paragraph giving a report of his case, and carried out with him

to Bombay, where he was voyaging. Thence he posted it to the Birkenhead policeman, who on receiving it fondly imagined that, coming from India, it must contain news greatly to his advantage. He readily paid the 2s. postage, and hastily broke the seal. His disappointment on finding nothing but the newspaper cutting may be conceived. To chagrin, however, succeeded indignation, and he applied to the Birkenhead magistrates for advice how to proceed. What steps could he take to vindicate his wounded professional pride? The magistrates listened, laughed heartily, and at last gave him 2s.

A COMPANY was giving an entertainment at Worcester, and among the astounding attractions announced was "the celebrated giant Ching! Ching! Ching; height 7 ft. 9 in., weighing 20 stone." Unfortunately the prodigy, stumbling over a nail on the platform, fell down and came in two, to the upstart's delight of the spectators. The tumble disclosed the secret of the composition. Out rolled two living bodies, one of which had been hoisted "atop of another."

BUTLER, the actor, known as Hamlet Butler, was once playing *Macbeth* at Glasgow, and hearing there was no drum in the orchestra, desired that the deficiency might be remedied. Just before the curtain rose, finding his request had not been attended to, he again complained to the manager, but was assured that it was all right, as he (the manager) had altered the part in which mention was made of a drum. So, to his disgust, when the Scotch Witch should have said, "A drum, a drum, Macbeth doth come!" she cried out, "A trumpet, a trumpet, Macbeth doth stamp it!"

A MAN who had seen nothing of genteel life unexpectedly succeeded to a fortune. His riches procured him attentions, and invitations to the houses of persons of rank. He dined one day at a gentleman's house, when, after a good quantity of wine had been drunk, and the company proposed going away, the host drank "Bon repos." This new toast the man of money treasured carefully in his mind, and soon having a large party to dine with him, after "The Queen," he gave "Bon repos." To his astonishment, the company rose and left the house. The cause of their sudden departure being afterwards explained to him by one of them, he said, "I really thought 'Bon repos' was a French general."

SPEAKING COWS AND WELSH WIGS.—Referring to the disinclination of the Italians to make peace with Austria unless everything Italian were surrendered to them, an English writer from Italy observes:—Suppose France had refused to make peace with us until she got back Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark, which, as all the world knows, are bits of Normandy chipped off the French cake by perfidious Albion; and suppose England had persisted in menacing France with war until the latter power surrendered Brittany, which is palpably a part of the ancient Armorica—where the very cows speak Welsh, and where the female peasantry, after sowing their luxuriant tufts to the Parisian manufacturers of shinglings, cover the nakedness of their heads with Welsh wigs. Which is a fact not generally known.

GOOD NEWS FOR FRANCE.—We have long boasted of the British oak. Unhappily, oak-apples are now so plentiful that we are obliged to admit that we are suffering from a successful invasion of the gall.—*Punch.*

COOL!

Here is an example of modest requirements:—Wanted, by a lady, immediately, for a few weeks, change of air, with agreeable society and amusement.—Address A. B., &c., &c.

We only wonder that she is satisfied with merely a visit of a few weeks. But we fancy there are not so many weeks about, that she will get an invitation very readily.—*Punch.*

WHAL'S FUN TO YOU IS DEATH TO US.—What is that which a London tradesman takes with pleasure, and a Russian serf with pain?—*An evening Punch.*

A FACT FROM NORTH LANCASHIRE.—Traveler: "I say, I want to go to Chorley—which is my way?"

Communicative *Notice* (pointing): "Yon!"

Traveler: "Where does the other road go?"

C. N.: "Do y'no good if I tell y'! Wants to go to Chorley, don't y'?" Well, you's yer road—Go on!—*Punch.*

PRUSSIAN POT AND HANOVERIAN KETTLE.—The King of Prussia is advertising "Stolen Goods" in the shape of the list of the bonds, bills, notes and securities which King George of Hanover carried off in his flight from his dominions, and giving notice that payment of them is suspended. We have heard of kings putting themselves in the *Gazette*—as conquerors, if not as bankrupts: but this is the first instance on record, we should suppose, of one monarch putting

another into the *Hue and Cry*. King George declares that he has a right to his capital, and his interests besides; and so he means to keep the money. He may plausibly contend that he has as much right to do Hanover out of bonds, as Prussia has to do Hanover into 'em. If it comes to the question of stealing (as between King G. and King W.)—well, we should observe that there is a good deal to be said on both sides.—*Punch*.

IMPOSSIBLE.

A new addition to Madame Tussaud's is Bismarck—

Fancy Bismarck—wax!
Fancy Bismarck—a model!—*Punch*.

EMPHATICALLY THE BEST.—On the Latin Primer question we have only to remark, that accent the first syllable, and you get in "A Grinder of Small Boys" the best Latin Primer.—*Punch*.

JUSTICE TO SCOTLAND.—We have heard that there has been difficulty in settling the question how to arrange a Scottish Valhalla. Scotch theology stops the way. But could not something be done by giving eminent Scotchmen an *iche* in the Temple of Fame?—*Punch*.

A FIX FOR FITZOSBORNE.

Interesting Child (who has been paddling in the sand and mud):

"Please, sir, will you lead me your pocket-handkerchief to wipe my feet?"

Fitzosborne, who prides himself on his snowy cambric, hesitates.

Interesting child (earnestly):—"Oh, sir; do, sir, please! They're so muddy!"—*Punch*.

PAINFUL PARALLEL.—A new book, by a clever author, is announced, with the title, *Lost Among the Wild Men*. A cynical friend of ours, who is obliged to stay in London, and see a good deal of his humble relations, declares that he can write a more affecting autobiography, to be called *Found Among the Tame Men*.—*Punch*.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

STRAWBERRIES AND CLARET.—Over three quarts of strawberries pour one bottle of good claret wine. Add sugar to suit the taste.

EXCELLENT BLACK INK.—Ink of the very finest and most intense black may be prepared by adding a very minute portion of vanadic acid, or vanadate of ammonia, to a solution of nutgall. This ink is much more lasting than ordinary ink.

JUNGMANN forms a cement by mixing two parts of finely sifted unoxidized iron filings with one part of perfectly dry and finely powdered loam, and kneads the mixture with strong vinegar until a perfectly homogeneous mass is formed, when the cement is ready for use. It resists fire and water and quickly hardens.

THE VIRTUES OF BORAX.—The washerwomen of Holland and Belgium, so proverbially clean, and who get up their linen so beautifully white, use refined borax as washing-powder, instead of soda, in the proportion of one large handful of borax powder to about ten gallons of boiling water: they save in soap nearly one-half. All the large washing establishments adopt the same mode. For laces, cambrics, &c., an extra quantity of the powder is used; and for crinolines, requiring to be made stiff, a strong solution is necessary. Borax, being a neutral salt, does not in the slightest degree injure the texture of the laces: its effect is to soften the hardest water, and therefore it should be kept on every toilet-table. To the taste, it is rather sweet; it is used for cleaning the hair, is an excellent dentifrice, and in hot countries is used, in combination with tartaric acid and bi-carbonate of soda, as a cooling beverage. Good tea cannot be made with hard water; all water may be made soft by adding a teaspoonful of borax powder to an ordinary-sized kettle of water, in which it should boil. The saving in the quantity of tea used will be at least one-half.

A FOREIGNER sends us the following complaint: "It has often been the scandal of the metropolis in other countries that strangers there, and especially foreigners, are exposed to the most disgusting impertinence. Not content with turning round and looking a person 'fair in the face,' the unfortunate visitor, if he have any peculiarity of physiognomy, dress, or manner, is assailed from places and persons claiming to rank above 'Billingsgate' with cries of slang unnecessary to repeat or enumerate. In no other city, perhaps, in the world is this disparaging practice carried to so great an extent, and it becomes all the more annoying that in no other place is polite demeanour towards all so largely expected. In Paris a person may traverse the length and breadth of the city, and pass through the most crowded thoroughfares, having the

most conspicuous personal peculiarities, and wearing the most grotesque garments, and no interference whatever is manifested either by young or old. Why should London be thus surpassed? It has been answered that in Paris personal degradatory remarks are included in 'Le Code Pénal,' and cognizable by the police, and that in 1861 the law on this subject received a new impetus by the prefect issuing a placard intimating that any shopkeeper found guilty of directing the attention of any customer to any defect or damage in the clothes of casual passers-by should be liable to a severe *amende*."

FAREWELL TO SUMMER.

FAIR Queen of Summer, once again
I bid a sad good-bye to you,
And all the glorious fairy train
That wait upon you too.
And grateful thanks to heaven and thee
For gifts bestowed so lavishly.
Oh, Fairy! could I bid thee stay,
You should not leave me for a day.
No more from yonder forest free
I hear the warbler's busy hum—
No more their songs of melody
Upon the breezes come.
And see! look up! above "mansoul"
Dark, gloomy clouds in masses roll;
While he, the monarch of the sky,
Hides in his glory, passing by.
I would that he could stay:
For Frost and Snow can never brook
The fiery monarch's blazing look,
Not even for a day.
It may not be!—no more I see
All the stately forest trees—
In fancy—bowing to the breeze.
No more I see the flow'r fair
That yesterday were blooming here.
And stormy zephyrs ride the air,
And keen and fitful howls the blast,
And nature far away has cast
Her fairy robes of yesterday
To don her sable gear to-day.
For stern King Winter comes again,
Followed by all his gloomy train.
See, Queen Summer knows her hour!
And with all her fairy train,
At once retreats, with hasty feet,
Before King Winter's power.

FRED. C.

GEMS.

THE best of friends fall out, soon or late. Even our teeth are no exception to the inexorable rule.

MEN wrangle in assertion and argument; and quiet truth disappears amid the noise and confusion.

He who swears in order to be believed is but a blundering counterfeit of a man of truth.

THE happiest man is the benevolent one, for he owns stock in the happiness of all mankind.

Hot water satisfies no thirst, angry words mend no broken cups and saucers.

TIME never passes so slowly and tediously as to the idle and listless. The best cure for dullness is to keep busy.

THERE may be a quiet love in many hearts, which, though cold, cutting, and sharp to the outer world, labours and throbs in their inner world warmly, tenderly for each other; as it were lofty palm trees armed with long thorns against all that lies below, but on their summit filled with precious palm wine of the most vigorous friendship.

DENTU, the well-known Palais Royal editor, has given £20,000 for the privilege of publishing the catalogue of the Great Exhibition. The following calculation as to the probable amount of profits he will thereby reap has been made: Suppose a million of copies to be issued; the cost of printing, paper, and advertising these said copies will at least come to £12,000. To this sum add the £20,000 paid for the privilege of publishing them, and you have at once the formidable sum of £32,000 sterling. Sell each copy at a franc, and M. Dentu will at once realize £8,000 profit.

FOOD AND MUSCULAR POWER.—At the last meeting of the members of the Royal Institution, Professor Frankland lectured on the source of muscular power, in which he advocated new views respecting the kind of food that supplies most vital energy. As heat is convertible into mechanical force, it was assumed that the kind of food which, during its slow combustion in the body, produces the most heat must also be capable of developing the greatest amount of muscular

power. By this means it was determined that butter, oils—cod-liver oil in particular—cheese, arrowroot, flour, potatoes, and other substances abounding in carbon and hydrogen, produce more muscular energy than lean beef, mutton, and other nitrogenous food. Professor Frankland observed that animal food might be of importance in maintaining the muscular fibres, and might contribute something towards the development of muscular power, but that its principal source was food composed of oleaginous substances, vegetables, or vegetable products.

THE year after next will be the centenary of the Royal Academy. It is true that it originated in a voluntary association of painters, who in 1765 obtained a royal charter as the "Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain." But it is equally true that this society was broken up by disputes among its members, and that the institution can boast of a continuous existence only from 1768, when it obtained a fresh charter of incorporation as the "Royal Academy of Arts." The Royal Academy of Painting at Edinburgh dates from 1751, fourteen years earlier.

STATISTICS.

THE number of black-lead pencils made in Keswick was computed at about 25,000 per week, that is about 13,000,000 per annum. Some of these pencils are worth 4s. per gross, and some are sold as low as 1s. 6d. per gross, a sum at which they were sold for each before the era of machinery.

TRADE AND FINANCE.—From the "Statistical Abstract," lately published, we notice, amid an enormous array of figures of great national importance, that the actual receipts at the Exchequer for the last two years were 70,313,000/ and 67,812,000/, which shows 2,500,000/- less for 1865-6 than for 1864-5, but this difference is much less than the amount of the duties repealed by Mr. Gladstone's budgets. The total trade in the last two years, imports and exports, was 457,572,000/ and 489,993,000/. The quantity of raw cotton received in the two years was 893,305,000 lb. and 977,970,000 lb. The quantity returned for home-consumption, or the excess of imports over exports, was 648,602,000 lb.—675,069,000 lb. The export of coal is increasing; of coals, cinders, and culm, the value was, in 1864, 4,166,000/; in 1865, 4,432,000/; the weight, 8,810,000 tons and 9,189,000 tons. The exports of copper, wrought, unwrought, or mixed, were less in value, being respectively for the two years 8,889,000/ and 3,166,000/. Lead also experienced a decrease, 779,000/ and 583,000/. Tin plates were 1,263,000/ and 1,483,000, an increase of about 25 per cent. The exportation of machinery showed an increase. Steam-engines rose from 1,617,000/ in the one year to 1,953,000/ in 1865. Of machinery of other sorts there was 3,271,000/ worth imported in 1865, and 3,261,000/ in 1865.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE cost of management of St James's, the Green, and Hyde parks, which in 1851 was somewhat under £11,000, has since 1856 ranged at an average exceeding £26,000 a year.

THE National Gallery has lately acquired a superb Rembrandt, "Christ Blessing Little Children," a work of considerable size, about five and a half feet upright. The price was £7,000.

CONSUL EDMUND BAUER, of Trieste, has received an autograph letter, dated the 10th of June, in English, from the King of Siam. It is in an envelope of black satin, sealed with the royal seal, and refers to the negotiations for a treaty of commerce between Siam and Austria.

THE SANTORIN ERUPTION.—The eruption in the crater harbour of the island of Santorin continues steadily, without alteration in its degree of violence. Specimens of the substances ejected by the new crater are now on view at the Museum of Geology in Jermyn Street.

MR. GEORGE MACKENZIE, of Glasgow, has taken out a patent for improvements in the manufacture of gas, by which gas of superior quality is produced by saturating the small of anthracite coal, now a waste product of no value, with heavy mineral oil, an article of which the production is also in excess of the demand.

IT would seem that the doing away with the use of Greenwich Hospital as a retreat for old sailors and marines has not been found a very successful measure, inasmuch as a good number of the veterans have been obliged to have recourse to the assistance of the poor-rates, and applications for readmission are neither few nor far between. We should not be surprised, nor in truth sorry, to see the grand old hospital reverting to its ancient uses.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. J. B.—Cascaria.

Amy, nineteen, tall, dark, and amiable.

O. M.—Refer to the terms of your apprenticeship indenture.

August.—Write to us more fully. We have never heard of the sect you mention.

H. Y. M.—Any confectioner will give you the information you require.

J. DAWSON.—Apply to a colonial newspaper agent. The "London Directory" will supply you with a list of names.

ARGONIS ELEGANTE.—Any artificial-flower maker will give you the information.

J. H. C.—Certainly not; it would be a very bad compliment to your second husband.

E. G. B., twenty-five, would like a wife of small stature, as he is only 5 ft 7 in. in height. (Handwriting tolerable.)

LISSETTE, twenty-three, fair, medium height, dark hair, dark grey eyes, and good tempered.

P. R.—As executrix or administratrix you may, after grant of probate, claim the rent due up to the time of your late husband's death. Do not post-date the receipt.

GLYN MAY FERN, sixteen, a blonde, and SEAWOLD, seventeen, a Brunette, wish to correspond with gentlemen a few years older than themselves.

J. W. W., thirty-five, dark, and respectably connected. Lady replying must be of good temper, and have a little money.

H. A. B.—The broker is bound to remain in possession five days before proceeding to a sale. In case of any irregularity in this respect, apply at once to a police magistrate.

LILLY, twenty-one, tall, handsome, dark hair and eyes, lively disposition, and very fond of home. Respondent must be a dark gentleman.

OLIVE, twenty, medium height, dark curly hair, blue eyes, good tempered, and lively. Respondent must be good tempered.

HOPA, twenty-one, blue eyes, golden hair, good looking, accustomed to housekeeping, and in possession of a good business.

ALICE, twenty-one, dark, and respectable, would make a steady respectable mechanic a good wife. Handwriting very fine.

M. P. and A. P., two sisters. "M. P." is a dark Brunette, with a rosy colour, and just seventeen. "A. P." is fair, with golden hair, light blue eyes, and a loving heart.

ALICE H., twenty-one, golden brown hair, dark grey eyes, medium height, and rather inclined to be fat. Respondent must be tall, dark, good tempered, and steady.

ELLEN W., twenty-one, dark brown hair and eyes, and medium height. Respondent must be very dark, medium height, and good tempered.

A. Z.—Consult a respectable solicitor. You should sue in *forma pauperis*, and the cost should not exceed seven or eight pounds; but that depends, of course, upon the solicitor you employ.

S. W. C.—No ring is required at a register office on the solemnization of a marriage. It is there treated as a purely civil contract, and no religious ceremony is performed. The marriage, however, is equally binding at law.

LENOX.—To cure little black spots in the skin: Rose water, 3 oz.; sulphate of zinc, 1 drachm. The face having become dry after being wetted with this mixture, gently apply a little cold cream.

NELLY, between nineteen and twenty, under the medium height, light brown hair and eyes, not considered bad looking. Respondent must be a respectable mechanic, about twenty-five.

MUSICIAN.—In the middle ages, minstrels were a class of men who subsisted by the arts of poetry and music. They sang to the harp, verses composed either by themselves or others.

JOSEPHINE.—For headache the following simple remedy will prove effectual: A small quantity of any spirituous liquor placed in the hollow of the hand and inhaled through the nostrils.

SCARBOROUGH.—A promise to pay by instalments is no legal tender. The "Habeas Corpus Act" will not serve a defendant in custody for debt under legal arrest. Wearing apparel, unless in actual use, may be seized under an execution.

C. A., who writes to us from Suez, where he is at present professionally engaged as an engineer, at a salary of £400 a year, wishes to know some young lady by correspondence, so as to be ready to marry when he comes to England, in about six months' time. The lady must be rather tall, blonde, from seventeen to twenty, strong constitution, able to fill with credit such a home as £400 a year offers, and as

"C. A." has good prospects of returning to England to fill a better situation, he would wish her to have an income of her own. "C. A." is twenty-six, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, strong constitution, speaks Arabic and French, and very fond of literature. The lady he may elect may have the option of living at Bombay or Suez.

ALICE F., sixteen, very fair, with grey eyes, good teeth, golden hair, slightly below the medium height, and a good pianist. Respondent must be of good family.

JAMES THORNE.—1. A runaway apprentice is liable to punishment on his return, even if he have in the meantime attained his majority. 2. Money can be sent to France through a banker, who will tell you the charge, which will vary according to circumstances.

AGNES GRAHAM.—1. A good, yet simple wash for the complexion may be made as follows: Flour of sulphur mixed in a little sweet milk; after standing a few hours, the milk (not the sulphur) should be rubbed into the skin; prepare over night and use the next morning before washing. 2. Handwriting very neat, and ladylike.

DRATTON TRAVERS.—The Presidents of the United States have been as follows:—Washington entered upon office in the year 1789; John Adams, 1797; Thomas Jefferson, 1801; James Madison, 1809; James Monroe, 1817; John Quincy Adams, 1825; Andrew Jackson, 1829; Martin Van Buren, 1837; W. H. Harrison, 1841; John Tyler, 1841; James R. Polk, 1845; Zachary Taylor, 1849; Millard Fillmore, 1850; Franklin Pierce, 1853; James Buchanan, 1857; Abraham Lincoln, 1861; Andrew Johnson, 1865.

JANE.—Put a piece of paper in your mouth, chew it rapidly, and it will stop your nose bleeding. I have seen the remedy tried frequently, and always with success. Doubtless any substance would answer the same purpose as paper, the stoppage of the flow of blood being caused, doubtless, by the rapid motion of the jaws, and the counter action of the muscles and arteries connecting the jaws and nose. Physicians state that placing a small roll of paper or muslin above the front teeth, under the upper lip, and pressing hard on the same, will arrest bleeding from the nose—checking the passage of blood through the arteries leading to the nose.

FOREST SONG.

Off to the leafy wildwood tree!

The bird is singing there for thee:

Her song is old, the same that made

Wild music in the sacred shade

A thousand years ago for those

Who now beneath the bough repose;

But for its very oldness dear

To all in whom is interwrought

Like starlight in some shadow-woof,

The harmony of solemn thought

Off to the leafy wildwood tree!

The rill is singing there for thee:

How sweetly from its silver throat

Is swelling every gentle note!

How bird and breeze make soft refrain

Unto the rock-musician's strain!

They all are old; yet still but makes

A grandeur, with the sweetness sung,

Like autumn clouds in pensile state

Above some murmuring fountain hung.

Off to the leafy wildwood tree!

The gorgeous summer waits for thee;

She waits with bird and breeze and flower,

With screening bough and fragrant bower,

With olden song, so soft and weird,

By many generations heard,

Bearing its burden still for all,

Sweet as the passion of the dove;

In which we hear for evermore

The ecstasy alone of love.

R. W.

nobody. Under these circumstances, we think—1. That it would be wicked on the part of our fair correspondent to marry her cousin. 2. That it would not be prudent for a young woman of twenty-four to marry a youth of nineteen. Lastly, that Edith had better wait patiently until she has really discovered her own mind.

ANNIE AND CONNY.—"Annie" is twenty-six, fair, dark hair and eyes, and *très petite*. "Conny" is twenty, dark hair and eyes, a Brunette, and of medium height.

LIZZY STONE asks us for a cure for deafness. Deafness may be congenital, chronic, or temporary. It may arise from a variety of causes, and be curable or incurable according to the cause. Go to a physician or an hospital, where you may obtain, gratuitously, advice on which you may rely.

TAYLOR COLLINS.—The phrase "Sub-rose" (under the rose) is supposed to have originated during the wars of the roses. The partisans of either white or red rose met in taverns or hostilities and drank beneath a rose in plaster affixed to the ceiling, a common ornament at the present day.

PORTIA AND NERISSA are in search of a Bassanio and Gratiano. "Portia" is nineteen, with sufficient means, medium height, dark, grey eyes, and plays and sings well. "Nerissa" is seventeen, lively, below the middle height, pretty, fair, blue eyes, and plays well. 2. Any MS. sent to the office of THE LONDON READER will receive our best attention. We must, however, refer our correspondents to the notice at the bottom of the last page.

EMILIA, nineteen, and good looking, appeals to a tall gentleman about twenty-eight. 3. We cannot conscientiously recommend a young lady who "declares that her face is her fortune," that she is ambitious, and that she "can do anything" to adopt the stage as a profession. Such an one would find it full of pitfalls. Handwriting quite characteristic of the jauntiness of the composition. We are sadly afraid Emilia is a wee bit giddy.

FLORENCE.—We must be ungracious enough to declare, that we would not, if we could, give you a receipt for an asaemal for your face, neck, and shoulders. To the best of our remembrance of the proceedings during a trial, some time since, in one of the Law Courts, a lady was charged something over £100 for being thus artificially beautified, at the cost of her health, and, let us add, good sense. Artificial teeth are good, as they help to preserve the health; but an artificial skin is not only physically injurious, but a delusion and a snare.

HANDWRITING.—"A Constant Reader." Very good; quite fit for a solicitor's office.—"Clothie." Quite fit for a governess. We hope, however, it is not her only qualification for the profession.—"A. M. M." Too crude; take a few lessons.—"Constant Reader." Very indifferent.—"Split-pepper." Not bad, but requires more care and practice.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

GALLANT TOM, BEN BACKTAT, and EDWARD are responded to by—"Harriet," "Sarah," and "Lizzie." "Harriet," who would prefer "Edward," is nineteen, dark, good looking, and is at present with a widowed aunt. "Lizzie" is eighteen, short, fair, with light blue eyes and light curly hair; would like to hear from "Ben." "Sarah" is nineteen, middle height, and very fair; would prefer "Gallant Tom."

ARTHUR G. by—"Eveline," twenty-one, who has £600, and does not know how to lay it out to advantage, but thinks "Arthur" would know. She is good, steady, and persevering.

J. S. R. by—"H. M." twenty-one, fair, petite, pretty, the daughter of a military officer, with good connexions, a small independence, and anxious to get rid of a tiresome guardian; and—"Midnight Dream," who is of a comparatively poor, but high and proud family, who has spared no expense in her education, is nineteen, interesting, being pale, with dark curly and eyebrows, and has been distinguished as a pianist since a child.

R. Y. (STAFFORDSHIRE) by—"A. A. N." (a widow of Hull), twenty-eight, fair, thinks she would make his home happy, and be a good mother to his children. "A. A. N." can read and write, and understands housekeeping, is a Protestant, left with one little girl, between five and six years old, and of poor but honest parents, and knowing what it is to be both poor and afflicted, would do her best to make "L. Y." a loving and faithful wife.

R. Y. by—"J. M. G. G." twenty-seven, poor, but respectable.

HICCI by—"M. B." nineteen, 5 ft 2 in. in height.

Moss by—"B. H. T." twenty-seven, 5 ft 11 in. in height, with whiskers and moustache, good looking, good figure, gentlemanly, and in a comfortable situation.

LOVELY ONE by—"G. E." twenty-five, good looking, and in a good situation.

M. A. W. by—"J. B.," who thinks he would make her a good partner.

KATE KEARNEY by—"Welcome," 5 ft. 11 in. in height, fair, whiskers and moustache, good figure, gentlemanly, amiable, and fond of home.

EMMA P. by—"H. W." forty-five, fair, 5 ft 11 in. in height.

GRACE D. or CONSTANCE M. by—"H." twenty-eight, 6 ft. 1 in. in height, fond of reading and home, and now in a station where he could well appreciate a companion in a loving wife.

MAGGIE, by—"A Young Briton," twenty, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, brown hair, dark eyes and eyebrows, good figure, moderately good looking, in a merchant's office, with £1000 per annum, and fair prospects; and—"H. J. L." twenty-two, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, dark, clear complexion, good looking, just passed the final law examination, and partner in a practice worth £1000 per annum.

PART XLI., FOR OCTOBER, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

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